

AIR WAR COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

INDIA AS A RESPONSIBLE NUCLEAR POWER: A
STRATEGY FOR STABILITY

by

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A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements

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Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama

Dec 2002

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE DEC 2002		2. REPORT TYPE N/A		3. DATES COVERED -	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE India as a Responsible Nuclear Power: A Strategy for Stability				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Air University Press Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-6615				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release, distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 77	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

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Preface

When, in May 1998, both India and Pakistan conducted their respective nuclear tests, a shocked and disbelieving international scrambled to counter this sudden outbreak of nuclear proliferation. The United States, Japan, Britain, and Australia imposed a wide range of diplomatic and economic sanctions on both India and Pakistan. But both in India and Pakistan, there was public jubilation. While Indians asserted that India had been transformed into a nuclear weapons power, there were also many, both in India and around the world, wondered what India was up to. A nervous Pakistan, already under the strain of an inferiority complex vis-à-vis India, soon played on the world's worst fears of a nuclear holocaust, declared that it would not hesitate to use her nuclear weapons if required.

India's declared reason for going overtly nuclear was that nuclear capability would improve her security scenario. There are many who would dispute this. There are some who recommend a complete roll-back of India's weapon program. There are others who applaud India's act and recommend a large and ready nuclear arsenal. Now that the nuclear 'genie' is 'out of the bottle', the question is more pertinently one of the future nuclear posture that India would adopt. In this paper, I have attempted to predict the future contours of India's nuclear posture. Broadly, I have tried to focus on the nebulous aspects of determining India's security concerns and her appreciation of how the future might take shape. There are many, especially in the West who would dismiss India's concerns as figments of her imagination. While there may be some elements of truth in this, there is equally the possibility that India may be right after all.

However, it is strange that experts and ‘think tanks’ failed to appreciate the evolving strategic environment in Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In this respect, the dissolution of the communist empire and subsequent marginalization of Russia, the preeminence of the United States and the emergence of China, when taken together, may have played a significant role in India’s decision to go ‘nuclear’. The tendency to club India and Pakistan together irrespective of their individual security concerns have contributed to the myopic assessments of India’s security needs.

In Chapter I, I have posited that India is following a *restrained* nuclear posture and would continue to do so in the future. To get to that point of view, I have tried to trace the historical and strategic imperatives that influenced India’s perceptions of her security. I have also attempted to analyze the impact of the dynamics of political situation in Pakistan, the regional ambitions of a nuclear China, and the role of the US in Asia on India’s security concerns.

In the Chapter 2, I have tried to trace the evolution of India’s nuclear strategy, doctrine, and the contours of the most likely nuclear posture that she would adopt. In Chapter 3, the discussion revolves around India’s threat perceptions and the most likely conclusion that she may draw from her reading of the security environment around her, leading to an assessment of the most beneficial posture that can obtain in the given circumstances. Finally, there is a brief discussion on the nuclear risk reduction measures that need to be adopted by India to ensure that both her nuclear posture and safety are optimally matched.

I must acknowledge the guidance and encouragement I received from Dr Grant Hammond, who very patiently sat through my be-fuddled ramblings when I was trying to get a grip on the subject. I am also grateful to him for his illuminating insights on the vexed problem of Indo-Pakistan relations and the politics of nuclear states. I also acknowledge the assistance I got from

the staff of the Air University Library, which formed the fount source of all the information used in the research. I must also convey my gratitude to the Air War College and the Air University for the opportunity to undertake this research. Finally, if there are any mistakes, omissions, or errors, or omissions in the research or in the paper, they are due entirely to me.

Abstract

After the tests of 1998, India has merely moved sideways from existential to minimum deterrence. From the options available to it, India would in all probability opt for a nuclear posture in the form of a “force-in-being” which implies that India's nuclear capabilities will be strategically active, but operationally dormant. This would give her capability to execute retaliatory action within a matter of hours to a few weeks. India’s draft Nuclear Doctrine is by no means the last word on the subject. India’s nuclear doctrine and should be seen as an evolving system of beliefs that governs the rationale and use of nuclear weapons.

India’s declared policy on the use of nuclear weapons is one of “no first use” but an “assured and massive retaliation” in case of nuclear aggression on the part of its enemies. In keeping with this policy, avoiding the high costs of a ready arsenal and to reinforce its long tradition of strict civilian control over the military, India would try to acquire only a nominal deterrence capability against Pakistan and China. This “de-alerted” capability would be reflected in the form of completed nuclear weapons stored in a dissembled condition, i.e., warheads along with the sub-assemblies and delivery systems being kept at different locations separated by large geographical distances.

India considers that nuclear weapons are, first and foremost, political instruments rather than military tools and therefore nuclear weapons, in the Indian context are seen as pure deterrents than as implements of war. India strongly believes that a nuclear war cannot be won and therefore must never be fought. India believes that even a delayed, or ‘ragged’ nuclear

response should deter its adversaries. India maintains that its nuclear capability is based on the strategic challenge posed by China and on the need for a stable Asian balance of power. In the Indo-Pak case, any nuclear exchange, while being certainly painful for India, would simply obliterate Pakistan.

The key to a lasting peace in the sub-continent is the resolution of the Kashmir issue on mutually acceptable terms to India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir. Both nations have powerful incentives to establish a peaceful and economically beneficial relationship, but the intransigence of the Kashmir issue makes that possibility at the moment seem very remote indeed. Though the US may pressurize Pakistan to halt terrorist infiltration into Kashmir, it also expects India to restore normalcy and a legitimate government in Kashmir. To get China to bear pressure on Pakistan, India may have to make some strategic concessions, which may involve considerable but not insurmountable domestic opposition.

Apart from a political solution or the lack of it, there are some essential elements of safeguards in nuclear posturing that are essential in order to prevent an accidental war involving nuclear weapons. India and Pakistan could unilaterally pursue other risk-reduction measures at this stage when their nuclear capabilities have not matured, despite the absence of a dialogue. The two countries must rethink the process of CBM measures as necessary for the resolution of their conflicts. It is in India's interest to engage third parties. India has everything to gain and Pakistan more to lose in the event of third party involvement. India's nuclear program was not initiated or sustained on xenophobic delusions. As in any working democracy, the process has been that of deliberate debate and consideration over a long period. India has to take the initiative to reduce and finally eliminate the danger of a nuclear holocaust. She alone amongst

the three (China and Pakistan being the others) has the innate strength of her democratic polity to aid her in the quest for an enduring freedom.

Chapter 1

India's Search for Security: An Introduction

When, on 11 May 1998, India announced that it had conducted three nuclear tests, including the detonation of a thermonuclear device there was shock and consternation all around the globe.¹ As a disbelieving international community scrambled to articulate an appropriate reaction to this, India announced two days later that it had conducted two more detonations, which she said had “completed the planned series of underground tests.”² Further shock was in store as Pakistan responded later the same month with nuclear tests of its own.³ In both countries there was public jubilation for the respective tests. Responding to this sudden outbreak of nuclear proliferation, the United States, Japan, Britain, and Australia imposed a wide range of diplomatic and economic sanctions on both India and Pakistan.⁴ Many Indian strategic analysts and commentators asserted that New Delhi had been transformed into a consequential "nuclear weapons power"⁵, a sentiment riposted by their counterparts in Pakistan.

The United States and others in the international community increased pressure on India and Pakistan to renounce their nuclear weapons programs.⁶ The nuclear tests also raised the specter of the possible diffusion of nuclear technology to neighboring countries and regions.⁷ These anxieties were aggravated by the Kargil conflict in mid-1999, a year after the sequential Pokharan and Chagai tests.⁸ This crisis “made clear that the new status each [India and Pakistan] claimed did not remove the danger of war, but certainly increased the stakes if war occurred.”⁹

To India, the tests represented the culmination of its quest for the reduction of its perceived strategic vulnerabilities and to ensure stability in an increasingly insecure neighborhood.¹⁰ India felt that far from destabilizing the sub-continent, India going overtly nuclear had helped bring a great deal of strategic stability by insuring against nuclear blackmail.¹¹ There was also a section of opinion in the west that India's nuclear weapons program was good for the stability of Asia.¹² Small as India's nuclear arsenal may be, there is no escaping the onerous burden that goes along with the possession of nuclear weapons. A false step, a careless move or a miscalculation could easily plunge the sub-continent into a nuclear hell, from which there will be no return. Though Pakistan is also a nuclear power, there is a general feeling that India, as the more powerful country, should seize the initiative and take steps to substantially reduce if not eliminate the danger of a nuclear conflagration in South Asia.

Pakistan's threat of "first use" of nuclear weapons, in case of a possible defeat in a conventional exchange with India, springs from its deep and pathological sense of insecurity. The internal situation in Pakistan, which hovers between stability and anarchy, is one that should be of great concern to India. A stable and democratic Pakistan is vital to India's interests. A Pakistan dissolving into a sea of sectarian and ethnic violence, terrorism, fundamentalism and economic collapse is hardly conducive to peace and tranquility in South Asia. Therefore, it is in India's interest to take the initiative in allaying Pakistan's fears and at the same time, work collaboratively with the West, especially the US, in order to pressure Pakistan into desisting from promoting terrorism on Indian soil and elsewhere. This will require certain steps to be taken by India towards confidence building measures (CBMs) with Pakistan. To facilitate this, India needs to enlist the support of the West; this may cost her some concessions on the issue of nuclear weapons.

A diminished nuclear capability resulting from this may ultimately be a price well paid for a stable and peaceful subcontinent. The preeminent position in South Asia that India seeks needs a greater vision and sacrifice on her part, a gesture that is expected of a 'gentle giant'. There is an inclusive multi-dimensional approach that will help ensure India's security, not an exclusive reliance on nuclear weapons. This approach involves enhancement of her economy, improvement in the quality of life that her citizens should enjoy, the maturity of the democratic process and her relations with her neighbors. In short, India has to establish its credentials as a responsible nuclear power.

Nuclear risk reduction in South Asia is a function of the security relationships between China, India and Pakistan and the nuclear doctrines of each of the countries. Since the tests, India has maintained a 'no first use' policy and has declared that it would not use nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear state.¹³ The thrust of India's nuclear strategy is one of 'assured and massive retaliation' if attacked first with nuclear weapons.¹⁴ This then implies a second strike capability. However, as we shall see later, India hopes that such a situation where she may be forced to use her nuclear weapons in anger, will never obtain and that a minimum credible deterrence should suffice for its security.

This paper seeks to validate two propositions. Firstly, that India's nuclear posture purposefully is; and should continue to be that of a credible minimum deterrence. The paper will also argue that India's version of 'credible minimum deterrence' posture will be a significant contributor towards nuclear stability on the subcontinent when coupled with associated nuclear risk reduction measures (NRRM). At this stage, a disclaimer is necessary. This paper does not seek to detract from or criticize India's security establishment's efforts towards creating a more secure future for India. Therefore, it is acknowledged that firstly, given the nature and evolution

of her domestic and foreign policy, it is certain that India's policy makers are adequately seized of the nuclear dilemma. Secondly, it is also certain that the security establishment in India has paid considerable attention to the aspects of nuclear doctrine, constitution of the nuclear force, role of international agreements and treaties prior to embarking on the nuclear path.

Determinants of India's Security Policy

The Colonial Legacy

India's long and troubled history was characterized by an incessant series of invasions and subjugations, starting in the 11th century AD, firstly by the Muslim invaders from Afghanistan, Persia, Central Asia and subsequently by the Europeans, principally the English. The long history of enslavement had left its mark deep in the minds of the people of the sub-continent, particularly amongst the Hindu majority. Therefore, after independence, any word or deed smacking of colonialism was vehemently opposed, however innocent or altruistic their intent may be.¹⁵ Flush with self-confidence after their victorious freedom struggle, the Indian political elite could not countenance being told what to do, especially by the west, which they saw as colonizers. Though India was desperately in need of financial aid after independence, it sought assistance only on terms that were seen not to impinge on its sovereignty.¹⁶ This also explains the obsessive drive for self-reliance, which was the hallmark India's nuclear and missile program to a great extent.¹⁷

India's security policy, like that of most nations, is derived from its neighborhood security concerns, its internal political imperatives, its international aspirations and economical considerations.¹⁸ More than the policy itself, understanding of the policy making process in India is more illuminating. The process is a complex interaction of foreign policy, domestic politics, party manifestos, extra-constitutional meddling, bureaucratic manipulation, military

compulsions, inter-service rivalries and budgetary pressures. The process is often interrupted by events like elections, political scandals and various assorted political dramas at the national and state level. However, there is a need to understand the peculiar circumstances of the Indian security conundrum.

India has always been driven by the need to be recognized as a great nation, to be able to stand shoulder to shoulder with the powerful, to have its neighbors and its enemies look upon her with respect, if not, fear. The anti-colonialism that marked and still does the Indian polity also stems from the partition of British India in 1947 into a majority Hindu India and Muslim majority Pakistan.¹⁹ To the Indian political elite, this was seen as a sign of yet another example of colonial domination and the odious practice of ‘divide and rule’ that the British followed in India during their 200-year rule of the country.

Strategic Circumstances 1980-2000

In recent years, India's assessment of the strategic scenario was that it had got worse. Internally, the last two decades have been marked by a spate of secessionist movements in Punjab, Assam, and Kashmir. There was also a rise of communally related incidents across the country. Externally, a perceived decline of its importance in world affairs, and a realization that many of its highest hopes remain have remained in the area of the unrealized has only served to heighten India's vulnerabilities. For many decades after independence, India touted the success of her Nehruvian inspired, state-led mixed economy and its leading role in the nonaligned movement. Both icons appear shattered. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a unipolar world, India has been struggling to redefine itself.²⁰ Reforms carried out in the early nineties have brought a new vibrancy to certain sectors of the economy, but these have yet to show benefits for all sections of society. The uncertainties of its economic progress

and the changing socio-political landscape, coupled with a fear of being marginalized, have contributed to a crisis of confidence. The crisis of confidence has also to a great extent precipitated by the policies that the traditional nuclear powers have followed with regard to India's aspirations. To many Indians, the condescension that the nuclear 'haves' have towards India is more a manifestation of the cultural and racial 'apartheid' than about strategic interests. The nuclear 'haves' are also viewed as hypocritical for denying India the same logic they have professed when defining their own strategic concerns. There is also a deep resentment of Western condescension: that the subcontinent is full of unstable people with deep historical resentments, incapable of acting rationally or of managing a technologically sophisticated arsenal.²¹ To Indians therefore, going nuclear was not an option but a cultural necessity and as a statement of its intent to show that she would accept nothing less than a first class status and the nation was still capable of carrying out a national project of some technological sophistication.²²

Given the circumstances, India negotiated the rocky path of non-alignment remarkably well. India's first Prime Minister Nehru laid the foundations of India's foreign policy, which was based on high moral ideals. The successive Congress led governments continued to preach and swear by Nehruvian ideals, till the coming to power of the BJP.²³ The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, literally "Indian People's Party") has historically been less shackled by any form of idealism and is not averse to playing realpolitik. But in openly declaring India a nuclear power, the BJP has simply articulated more expressly the desire for a nuclear deterrent that had guided Indian policies all along, but had never quite been owned up to. Even Nehru, idealistic as he may have seemed, kept the nuclear option open and encouraged the nuclear program from the start.²⁴

There are many legitimate misgivings about the fact that this decision was made by the BJP. Indian Muslims, for example, see its brand of Hindu nationalism as perilously

threatening, especially after the demolition of the Babri Masjid (mosque) in December 1992. However, in recent years, especially after coming to power at the helm of a 21- party coalition, the BJP has made concerted efforts to portray itself as a moderate, responsible and secular party.²⁵ Many in India maintain that the BJP was attempting to hijack India's long-term security concerns for its own political purposes. The truth is that the nuclear program has had the active though silent support of successive non-BJP governments after Nehru, with the exception of the Janata government in 1977-80.²⁶ Therefore, to attribute the tests purely to the BJP's political agenda is an attempt, rather incorrectly, to paint the party in a demonic hue.²⁷ The overwhelming support for these tests from the Indian public, most of whom are not otherwise allied with the BJP, would suggest deeper motivations, as discussed earlier.

India Vs Pakistan

On independence, India declared itself a secular republic while Pakistan, initially set-up as a secular nation, soon dissolved into an Islamic state.²⁸ There is a fear in Pakistan that India would attempt a re-integration of the sub-continent.²⁹ To exacerbate the issue, Kashmir has played a defining role in the hostility between the two neighbors. Two wars (in 1947-48 and 1965) and a limited action in Kargil (1999) have been fought over Kashmir. Pakistan supports the armed dissidence in Kashmir through supply of safe havens, arms, money and foreign mercenaries.³⁰ In effect, it is fighting a proxy war with the hope of annexing Indian Kashmir, a dream enunciated by generations of Pakistani leaders as the national goal. At an official level, however, Pakistan denies any physical aid to the militant separatists, whom it calls “freedom fighters”. Pakistani leaders claim that they have merely provided the moral and political support to the ‘Kashmiri freedom struggle’.³¹

Apart from Kashmir, both countries still have territorial disputes and problems related to the river water sharing arrangements.³² These however, pale into insignificance when compared to Kashmir. The current crisis in Kashmir goes back to the bloody days of partition. In 1947, hesitation by the Hindu ruler of the predominantly Muslim population in Kashmir precipitated interventions by both Indian and Pakistani troops and eventual accession of the ruler to India.³³ The conflict ended, to the satisfaction of neither party, essentially along the existing line of demarcation - the so-called Line of Control - leaving the significant Muslim population in the most coveted piece of real estate-the Vale of Kashmir firmly on the Indian side. In 1948, a UN resolution called for a plebiscite to determine the will of the population. That vote has never taken place.³⁴ Many consider the inability of the U.N to act on the Kashmir question as one of its greatest failures. To be fair to the U.N however, the Kashmir issue was locked up in a larger one, that of the Cold War.³⁵

In the half-century since, Kashmir has become the *cause célèbre* of the subcontinent. With each passing year, the human toll in Kashmir has been steadily rising, and with it the stakes involved. Paradoxically, this state of affairs, however painful, was tolerable to India so long as Pakistan was isolated.³⁶ No politician or leader on either side of the border would dare to risk political suicide by compromising on the issue of Kashmir. Kashmir has proved intractable to the extent that it has become virtually unsuitable for mediation.³⁷ There is no foreseeable compromise possible between the rigidly and zealously guarded opposite positions that both countries profess. Pakistan calls for international mediation (read US) to add pressure to its claim for a change in the Line of Control. India rejects any mediation and, indeed, any outside role because in doing so, would be tacitly acknowledging that there is a dispute.³⁸ Neither the United States nor Russia - or any other group of countries - has been able to do more than press both

Pakistan and India to resolve the issue peacefully and bi-laterally. The third possibility, independence for Kashmir is anathema to both.³⁹

From Isolation to Center-Stage: The Pakistan Factor

Governance in Pakistan was never easy, and the country has seen a succession of inept and corrupt civilian governments, which were often being deposed by military dictators. The most recent civilian and military governments sought to sustain themselves by appeals to Islamic fundamentalism. The latest victim of military coups was the government of Nawaz Sharif, overthrown by General Musharraf, the current head of state. The coup in Pakistan had the effect of isolating it from the international community. The economic sanctions imposed on both India and Pakistan after the 1998 tests, had near disastrous results on Pakistan's economy. The subsequent military coup only served to isolate Pakistan further from most international forums. Further, Pakistan's support of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and by extension, the Al Qaeda terrorist outfit based in that country, further accentuated this isolation. The combination of impending economic collapse, rise of fundamentalism, and the deepening international isolation was slowly turning Pakistan into a 'failed state'.⁴⁰

Pakistan's leaders have always played on Western fears to garner support. Way back in the 1950s, President Ayub Khan (a military dictator) projected Pakistan as staunchly anti-communist in contrast to India's perceived pro-USSR stance in order to benefit from US aid, both military and economic. Subsequent leaders, either civilian or military had fine-tuned this art of political blackmail to which the US seemed particularly susceptible, in order to prop their respective regimes. Stephen P. Cohen, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution notes:

“Failure has been a theme that successive Pakistani governments have used to their advantage. Zia, Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif and now Pervez Musharraf have warned

the West that they are making a stand against something irretrievably worse. Zia warned of a Soviet victory in Afghanistan; Benazir warned against the return of the military; Nawaz Sharif warned against a return of the incompetent Benazir Bhutto and then the military. The military now warns against the coming to power of militant Islamic groups such as the Jamaat-e-Islami, which in turn has warned against the coming to power of even more extremist Taliban-type forces. But just because Pakistanis have been crying wolf for so long we should not dismiss these threats”.⁴¹

Others US analysts echo a harsher sentiment and advocate a sterner line with Pakistan. In an article published in the Washington Post, Arthur H. Davis (former US ambassador to Paraguay and Panama) said “The Pakistani military regime is exhibiting an almost pathological determination to keep South Asia in turmoil, doing little to curb Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism breeding within its borders, while scuttling other steps toward peace. During his visit to the region, President Clinton threaded a needle of admonishing Pakistan for its support of violence in Kashmir while keeping the door open for engagement if it abated such activities. Unfortunately, his stern warnings have yet to exact much change.... Declaring Pakistan a terrorist state, and thus putting it on par with the terrorist groups it harbors and supports, would encourage the people of Pakistan to remove the military war mongers who have deprived them of sustainable development”.⁴²

11 Sep 2001 was a defining moment for Pakistan and its support for the terrorism in Kashmir. Overnight, Pakistan’s role in support for the Taliban and its suspicious involvement with terrorism in Kashmir with attendant linkages to world-wide terrorist activity have come under intense scrutiny. It is probable, but not certain, that Pakistan may be forced to give up its support to the militants in the Kashmir valley and in consequence, its claim on Kashmir.⁴³ The

attacks on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 Sep 2001 brought home to General Musharraf the vulnerability of Pakistan's position. Under intense US pressure, the dictator turned full circle. He abandoned the Taliban in Afghanistan, turned on fundamentalists in his own country and opened Pakistani territory to US operations against the Al Qa'ida. These actions had the effect of transforming a pariah state into a front-line ally of the US in its war against terror.⁴⁴ For India, the events appeared to take the sub-continent back to square one, a situation reminiscent of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The prospect of a revitalized Pakistan, aided by generous US backed financial assistance, and continuing to support terrorism in Kashmir, and becoming a permanent thorn in India's side, was unsettling.⁴⁵ The terrorist attack on the Indian parliament on 13 Dec 2001 seemed therefore, to provide a pretext to settle the Kashmir issue, and perhaps the challenge of Pakistan itself, conclusively.⁴⁶

Pakistan's Nuclear Program

On 28 May 1998 Pakistan announced that it had successfully conducted five nuclear tests. These tests came slightly more than 2 weeks after India carried out five nuclear tests of its own, and after many warnings by Pakistani officials that they would respond to India.⁴⁷ In addition, Pakistan's President Rafiq Tarar declared a state of emergency, citing "threat by external aggression to the security of Pakistan."⁴⁸ On 30 May 1998 Pakistan tested one more nuclear warhead with a yield of 12 kilotons.⁴⁹ The speed of the Pakistani response in carrying out its own tests in reply to India's confirmed the suspicion that Pakistan's nuclear program had matured some time earlier.⁵⁰ The tests were conducted in Chagai a remote area in Balochistan, bringing the total number of claimed tests to six. It has also been claimed by Pakistani sources that at least one additional device, initially planned for detonation on 30 May 1998, remained emplaced underground ready for detonation.⁵¹ These claims cannot be independently confirmed

by seismic means. Indian sources have said that as few as two weapons were actually detonated, each with yields considerably lower than claimed by Pakistan.⁵² Pakistan's Foreign Minister announced on 29 May 1999 that Pakistan was a nuclear power. He stated, "Our nuclear weapons capability is solely meant for national self defense. It will never be used for offensive purposes." He also stated, however, that "We have nuclear weapons, we are a nuclear power...we have an advanced missile program" and that Pakistan would retaliate "with vengeance and devastating effect" against any attack by India.⁵³

The Sino-Pakistani Bomb

China's involvement in Pakistan's nuclear program has been considerable. In 1976, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, had successfully negotiated a deal whereby China would provide Pakistan with fissile material and nuclear weapon designs.⁵⁴ In addition to helping Pakistan design and make nuclear weapons, China has provided Pakistan considerable support in the field of ballistic missiles. The Sino-Pakistani nuclear and missile collaboration is seen by India as a Chinese 'encirclement' and a threat to its security.⁵⁵

Along with Chinese assistance, Pakistan continued to acquire nuclear-related and dual-use equipment and materials from various sources—principally in Western Europe. There has been considerable speculation as to the extent of Chinese involvement and support to Pakistan's nuclear program. The recent exposure of the Pakistan-North Korean linkage involving missiles for nuclear technology is a case in point. It may very well be a Chinese stratagem to aid both its "friends" and avoid international strictures at the same time⁵⁶. There is also some speculation whether the Pakistani tests of 1998 were faked. It is argued that Pakistan did not actually have a bomb ready and the Chinese stepped in with a usable warhead, a face saving device for Pakistan.⁵⁷

Current Status of India-Pakistan Relations

The India-Pakistan summit at Lahore in February 1999 was the high point of bilateral relations in recent years, and also the high point of recent efforts to institutionalize bilateral risk-reduction measures. The Lahore Declaration, signed by both Prime Ministers, outlined the procedure for future peace talks and gave priority to revitalizing and expanding Confidence Building Measures (CBMs).⁵⁸ Unfortunately, the Pakistani army's ill-conceived Kargil venture⁵⁹ undid whatever confidence-building potential the Lahore document held. Finally, under pressure from the Clinton administration, Pakistan withdrew its forces at Kargil and the status quo was restored.⁶⁰

Over the past three years India and Pakistan have endured several periods of heightened tension. The two made several direct and indirect efforts at peacemaking, including an Indian ceasefire initiative in Kashmir during Ramadan and a bilateral summit at Agra in July 2001. When some Pakistani-sponsored terrorists attacked the Indian Parliament in December 2001, they sparked-off a crisis that eventually led to a massive Indian military deployment.⁶¹ Soon, Pakistan matched the deployment and both countries suspended high-level bilateral contact. To the alarmed West, it seemed that both nations were flirting dangerously close to an unlimited and in consequence, a catastrophic nuclear conflict. The West also felt that the apparent conceptual haziness on the use of nuclear weapons was causing both sides to indulge in increasingly risky behavior, and posing the greatest risk of war.⁶²

In the Shadow of the Dragon

On 16 Oct 1964, China conducted its first nuclear explosion in Lop Nor. The fact that a territorial dispute existed between China and India, wherein the former had absorbed 10,000 square kilometers of Indian territory, illegally gifted to it by Pakistan, and claimed another

94,000 square kilometers, ensured that India could not ignore the reality of the Chinese nuclear program.⁶³ India's frantic efforts 'for security guarantees from the United States and the USSR,' as well as Britain, 'against possible nuclear threats from China.' Proved futile.⁶⁴ Therefore, the absence of any credible security guarantees, the Indian government of the day ruled in favor of pursuing a program leading to a 'peaceful nuclear explosive.'⁶⁵

China's emergence as the second most important power in the world is sufficient cause for worry. India's humiliation in 1962, the US-China rapprochement in 70s, the deference with which the US treats China, causes the fear that any global order based on an emerging Sino-U.S. relationship would forever marginalize India in Asian and global geopolitics.⁶⁶ It is not entirely an accident that India's first nuclear tests, in 1974, came after a thaw in Sino-U.S. relations, and that the recent tests have been conducted amid perceptions that Washington will do little to stand up to Beijing.⁶⁷

Another aspect that worried Indian security planners was the strengthening nexus between China and Pakistan, and that China was using Pakistan as a cat's paw against India.⁶⁸ It has been quite clear for some time that India regards China as its primary strategic worry. Most analysts underestimate the China factor in assessing the security situation in South Asia and instead tend to reduce the issue to India-Pakistan rivalry.⁶⁹ When China started its "encirclement" in 1990, alarm bells rang deafeningly in New Delhi.⁷⁰

US-India Relations

The United States has not yet publicly acknowledged the reality of a nuclear-armed India⁷¹ as part of a broader recognition of its emergence as a major economic and military power.⁷² The Clinton administration tried to pressurize India into forswearing nuclear weapons despite the fact that all sections of Indian opinion strongly favored a nuclear deterrent. The US

policy under President Clinton was to ‘cap, rollback and eliminate” nuclear proliferation.⁷³ Moderate elements in New Delhi are sympathetic to many of these objectives but need U.S. quid pro quos to make them politically attainable. With the change in administration in Washington and the post Sep 11 war on terror, there has been a change in Washington’s policies towards both India and Pakistan.

The sanctions that were placed on India in 1998 have for all practical purposes been removed. There is greater interaction between the two democracies. However, a major irritant still exists, and this concerns the preferential treatment meted out to China by the US. It is perplexing to most Indians that the US should act against India. Why, they wonder, does America pander to China, the world's largest authoritarian state, and patronize India, the world's largest democracy? The existing U.S. ban on the sale of civilian nuclear reactors badly needed by India to help meet its growing energy needs is a case in point. Indians find it galling that China is permitted to buy U.S. reactors, while India is not.⁷⁴ The reason for this blatantly discriminatory policy lies in legalistic hair-splitting in the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Since China had tested nuclear weapons in 1964, it was classified as a "nuclear weapons state" under the treaty. As such, Beijing was eligible to sign the NPT, along with the other powers then possessing nuclear weapons, the United States, Russia, Britain and France.

India branded the NPT as discriminatory and refused to sign. Now India would like to sign-on as a nuclear weapon state but the U.S. will not permit it. The US has been pressurizing India into signing the CTBT, NPT (as a non-nuclear state) join the negotiations for the FMCT and freeze its stockpile of fissile material at the present level.⁷⁵ However, in the current scenario, both India and Pakistan are most unlikely to discard whatever nuclear weapons capacity they possess⁷⁶ Washington wants India to stop all nuclear testing, halt production of fissile material,

halt missile testing and strengthen export controls. *Ironically, India unlike China, has never shared its nuclear technology with another nation.*

In terms of the war against global terrorism, the United States opposes the violation of the Line of Control (LoC) by terrorist groups and the use of terrorism against civilian populations. This is why the Bush administration has used its influence in Pakistan to press ever more insistently on an end to infiltration and the closing of the camps near the Line of Control facilitating it.⁷⁷ The United States also has a major geopolitical interest in cooperative relations with India, the world's largest democracy. A position of major influence for India in the region between Singapore and Aden is to some extent compatible with America's strategic interests in both the Middle East and Southeast Asia.⁷⁸ But the dynamics of the situation are far from clear-cut. The militant action in Kashmir is to quite an extent being conducted by foreign mercenaries, while the number of indigenous “freedom fighters” has been dwindling. Most of the foreign mercenaries have strong links with the al Qa’ida, a connection established by the ISI of Pakistan and its support for the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. While the Al Qa’ida and foreign mercenaries are on Pakistan's side against India in the proxy war in Kashmir, they are against the Musharraf government for its support to the US. This puts the Pakistani government in a fix, because it needs to simultaneously rein in the terrorists (under US pressure) and also exploit their talents against India.

There is also the distinct possibility that the Pakistani government has little or no control over the so-called ‘jehadi’ groups.⁷⁹ Thus, even while Musharraf says (and probably sincerely) that he is trying to control cross-border actions, he may lack the ability to enforce it. There is also a danger of some radical elements in the Pakistani army along with the fundamentalist groups trying to overthrow the Musharraf regime.⁸⁰ Many elements of the jehadi groups (and perhaps

some in the Pakistani intelligence services) have a vested interest in Musharraf's downfall by ignoring his orders and starting a war. This will severely hamper the US led war on terror in Afghanistan as the fundamentalist groups will try and remove the US military presence from Pakistani soil.⁸¹ The US military forces in Afghanistan may then lose their rear area and the Al Qa'ida might rediscover a base territory. Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan is one thing; Osama in Islamabad would be devastating.⁸² This danger confronts America with a grave dilemma. Even though the Pakistani regime has serious flaws, Musharraf has been a staunch ally in the battle against the Taliban, Al Qaeda and Islamic fundamentalism since 11 Sep 2001. In January, Musharraf separated Islam from cross-border violence and began a process of controlling the Islamic schools teaching global jihad. Were the most 'moderate Islamic'⁸³ regime in the region to collapse while America looks on, the consequences for Afghanistan and the entire region could be serious.⁸⁴

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¹ The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee's statement read "I have an important announcement to make: Today, at 1545 hours, India conducted three underground nuclear tests in the Pokhran range. The tests conducted today were with a fission device, a low yield device and a thermonuclear device. The measured yields are in line with expected values. Measurements have also confirmed that there was no release of radioactivity into the atmosphere. These were contained explosions like the experiment conducted in May 1974. I warmly congratulate the scientists and engineers who have carried out these successful tests." On-line, Internet. Full text available from <http://www.indianembassy.org>.

² "Suo Motu Statement by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in the Indian Parliament on May 27, 1998," India News, May 16–June 15, 1998. Pakistan, responding to these events, conducted its own nuclear tests in two parts on May 28 and May 30, 1998. While there was outrage at this open defiance of international sentiments, the Clinton administration was being pilloried for not having known that India and Pakistan were going to conduct their nuclear tests. For a more detailed account of the US reaction to the tests read George Perkovich, "India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation", (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 404, 417-424

³ For a comprehensive analysis and commentary as to why and how Pakistan was able to conduct its own tests immediately after the Indian tests read George Perkovich, 353-443.

⁴ Prem Shankar Jha, "The India Economy After Pokhran II" in Raju G.C. Thomas and Amit Gupta ed, *India's Nuclear Security* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2000), 221- 223 and George Perkovich, 436. The US waited for nearly a month mulling over the range and effect of the contemplated sanctions against both countries, while some countries, like Japan and Australia, were quick to act.

⁵ Brahma Chellaney, "India's Nuclear Planning, Force Structure, Doctrine and Arms-Control Posture", Paper presented at the Forum of the UNESCO International School of Science for Peace on *Nuclear Disarmament, Safe Disposal of Nuclear Materials, or New Weapons Developments? Where are the National Laboratories Going?* Landau Network-Centro Volta, Villa Erba, Cernobbio-Como, Italy, 2-4 July 1998. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.fas.org/> "In one go, India showed its capability to manufacture and test the most modern nuclear

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weapons — thermonuclear, boosted fission and low-yield types. No country has ever demonstrated such a range of weapon capabilities in one shot. In fact, no nation has conducted multiple tests of the kind India did. This was deliberate. It was intended not only to herald India's arrival as a nuclear-weapons state with deterrent capabilities but also to deal with external pressures. If India had conducted one test at a time to certify its warhead models, it would have come under swirling coercive pressures, possibly hindering its movement forward. By doing five bangs over two days, India gate-crashed the nuclear club, presenting a fait accompli to an astounded world. Nothing can undo this development. Unlike 1974 when a crude fission device was detonated without being configured as a warhead, the 1998 tests all involved warhead prototypes.”

⁶ Amit Gupta “A Nuclear Arms Control Agenda” in *India's Nuclear Strategy* ed. Raju G.C. Thomas and Amit Gupta, (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2000), 286-287.

⁷ Raju G.C.Thomas and Amit Gupta ed. *India's Nuclear Security* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2000), 4-5.

⁸ P.R. Chari, "Nuclear Restraint, Nuclear Risk Reduction, and the Security-Insecurity Paradox in South Asia," in *The Stability-Instability Paradox: Nuclear Weapons and Brinkmanship in South Asia* ed. Michael Krepon and Chris Gagne, June 2001. On-line. Internet. Available from <http://www.rand.org/>

⁹ Neil Joeck, “Nuclear Relations in South Asia,” in Joseph Cirincione, ed., *Repairing the Regime: Preventing the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000), p 133.

¹⁰ Stephen P. Cohen, “ Why did India “Go Nuclear” in *India's Nuclear Security* ed. Raju G.C.Thomas and Amit Gupta, (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2000), 21. Also see Barry B. Hughes, *Continuity and Change in World Politics: Competing Perspectives*, 3 rd Edition. (N.J., Prentice Hall,Inc., 1991), 47

¹¹ K Subrahmanyam, “ Nuclear Policy, Arms Control and Military Cooperation” Paper presented at the *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace-India International Center conference on India and the United States after the Cold War*, New Delhi, 07-09 Mar 1993, 7. Internet. Available at <http://www.ceip.org/files/projects/npp/resources/southasia.htm>

¹² “U.S. policy should be based on a tacit recognition that a multipolar Asian balance of power in which India possesses a minimum nuclear deterrent will be more stable than one in which China enjoys a nuclear monopoly” Selig S. Harrison, “Armed India can help stabilize Asia”, Los Angeles Times, 12 Sep 2000.

¹³ Deepa M Ollapally, “India's Strategic Doctrine and Practice” in *India's Nuclear Strategy* ed. Raju G.C. Thomas and Amit Gupta (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc: 2000), 77

¹⁴ The Draft Report on the Indian Nuclear Doctrine. On-line, Internet. Full text available from http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/CTBT/nuclear_doctrine_aug_17_1999.html.

¹⁵ Perkovich, 21.

¹⁶ Meenakshi Behera et al, *India: Opening up for Growth* (London: Euromoney Publications Plc, 1993), 8 “The colonial experience also colored Indian attitudes towards direct foreign investment in India. The East India Company had come to trade but remained to rule. Nehru and the other leaders were convinced that to safeguard the economic sovereignty of the infant republic, it was necessary to prevent foreigners from dominating economic activity. Therefore, foreign investment was discouraged through a host of restrictions.”

¹⁷ Perkovich, 49.

¹⁸ Perkovich, 447-448. George Perkovich notes that no other nation has followed anything like as tortured and restrained a path to nuclear weapons capability or with as much open, if largely symbolic, debate. He also argues that actual security threats have played an enabling but not decisive role in the progress of the program both on grounds of chronology and of the absence of serious strategic discussions prior to any of the major steps. Instead he argues that the push for the development of weapons and delivery systems has come from two sources: (a) a general desire to possess the symbols of great-powerdom and (b) the self-interest of the strategic enclave.

¹⁹ Alastair Lamb, *Incomplete Partition: The Genesis of the Kashmir Dispute 1947-1948*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 45-46.

²⁰ Pratap Bhanu Mehta, “A Nuclear Subcontinent: Understanding the Anxieties of South Asia”, n.p., On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.theharvardmagazine.org>.

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²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Sumit Ganguly, "Explaining the Nuclear Tests", in *India's Nuclear Strategy* ed. Raju G.C. Thomas and Amit Gupta, (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc: 2000), 55.

²⁴ Perkovich 26-27.

²⁵ "India can never be a Hindu state: Dy PM" Press Trust of India, *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 18 Nov 2002 and Pratap Bhanu Mehta, "A Nuclear Subcontinent: Understanding the Anxieties of South Asia", n.p., On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.theharvardmagazine.org>.

²⁶ Perkovich, 26-27.

²⁷ There is a tendency, even now, to somehow portray the BJP as a archetypal and rabidly fundamentalist Hindu party, especially by the Western media. How this has come about is a mystery. The BJP, like any other mainstream political organization in India is more or less representative of the diverse cultural groupings found in India. However, it's parent organization; the RSS has a predominantly Hindu membership and the BJP is supported by smaller fringe elements that do profess a more fire-brand version of Hindu nationalism. Amusingly, in a religious case of the pot calling the kettle black, the Pakistani leadership and media continue to play up this aspect in their public pronouncements.

²⁸ Owen Bennet Jones, *Pakistan: The Eye of the Storm* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 14-21. The most dramatic thrust towards Islamisation came during President Zia-ul-Haq's rule as dictator of Pakistan, from 1977 till his death in 1988. Successively, he set up a Federal Shariat Court, announced that all crimes would be tried under Islamic laws, the banking system would operate strictly as per the instructions given in the Quran and the education system would be purged of un-Islamic teachings and lastly, all government servants would have their performance assessed on the basis of their piety and knowledge of Islam.

²⁹ Jones, xiii.

³⁰ Peter Chalk, "Pakistan's Role in the Kashmir Insurgency", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 01 Sep 2001.

³¹ Ibid. There are currently five main groups fighting in Kashmir, all of which benefit from Pakistani support: - Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM); - Laskhar-e-Tayyiba (LeT); - al Badr;- Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM); and - Harakat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM). Sponsoring militancy in Kashmir is regarded as a relatively cheap and effective way of offsetting existing power symmetries (essentially through the philosophy of a 'war of a thousand cuts') while simultaneously creating a bulwark of instability along the country's vulnerable southern flank. Both are considered vital to ensuring that Pakistan has sufficient strategic depth to undertake a protracted conventional war on the sub-continent, should this ever become necessary.

³² The territories in question are the Sir Creek and Rann of Kutch, the marshy salt flats in western Indian state of Gujarat adjoining Pakistan's Sindh region. This area was the cause of a border dispute, which preceded Pakistan's second attempt to capture Kashmir the second round of the Indo-Pakistani conflict (1965). Jones, 76-77.

³³ Jones, 56-70.

³⁴ Ibid., 71-72.

³⁵ Joseph L. Noguee and Robert H. Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II*, (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1986), 177-178.

³⁶ Henry Kissinger, "Halting the slide towards War" *Los Angeles Times*, 10 Jun 2002.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Jones, 107-108.

³⁹ Jones, 106-107.

⁴⁰ Gaurav Kampani "The Military Coup in Pakistan: Implications for Nuclear Stability in South Asia" CNS Associate Paper, Oct 1999. n.p., On-line, Internet. Available from <http://cns.miis.edu>. Carlotta Gall, quoting General Pervez Musharraf wrote "Pakistan was about to be declared a terrorist country or a failed state when he took power in October 1999" in "Pakistani Is Yielding Some Powers, but Stays the Most Powerful" *The New York Times International*, 26 Nov 2002. n.p., On-line, Internet. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com>.

⁴¹ Stephen P. Cohen, quoted in an interview with Harinder Baweja, *The Logic of Third Party Mediation*, n.p., On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.stimson.org/asia/pdf>.

⁴² Arthur H. Davis, "Up the Ante on Pakistan," *The Washington Post*, 11 Sep 2000.

⁴³ Lee Feinstein, James C. Clad, Lewis A. Dunn, David Albright, "U.S. Policy toward India and Pakistan after September 11", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Non-Proliferation Project Global Policy Program*, 27 May 2002. "As the Bush administration begins to contemplate subsequent phases of the war against

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terrorism, Kashmir interferes more often than India, Pakistan, or the United States would like. Washington has been well aware of the connection of Pakistani-supported militants in Kashmir to Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. Since the bombings of U.S. embassies in East Africa in 1998, U.S. effort to enlist the Musharraf government in the hunt for bin Laden overtook proliferation concerns as the major issue in the bilateral relationship. The Bush administration temporarily set aside these concerns immediately following September 11, but Pakistani support for insurgency will no longer be tolerated after the defeat of the Taliban and rout of al Qaeda". n.p., On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.ceip.org>.

⁴⁴ Kissinger, "Halting the slide towards War" Los Angeles Times, 10 Jun 2002.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ "The government should do what America has done in Afghanistan and what Israel is doing in Palestine" Srichand Kripalani of the BJP quoted on BBC News after the suicide attack on the Indian Parliament, 13 Dec 2001. On-line, Internet. Available from www.bbc.co.uk/.

⁴⁷ Antony H. Cordesman and Arleigh A. Burke, *The Threat of Pakistani Nuclear Weapons*, 5, On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.csis.org>,

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Perkovich, 409-410, 433-435. Also *Resources on India and Pakistan: Chronology of Pakistani Nuclear Development*, Center for Nonproliferation Studies Monterey, CA. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://cns.mii.edu/research/india/paknucch.htm>. "In June 1990, the Indian government leaked information that China had rejected Pakistan's request to use the Lop Nor nuclear weapons test site."

⁵¹ Perkovich, 196-197.

⁵² Vijai K Nair, "The Sino-Pak Bomb?" China Brief Volume 2, Issue 11 23 May 2002, n.p., On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.jamestown.org>.

⁵³ Cordesman and Burke, 5.

⁵⁰ Perkovich, 196-197.

⁵⁵ Ben Sheppard "South Asia's Ballistic Missile Ambitions" in *India's Nuclear Strategy* ed. Raju G.C. Thomas and Amit Gupta, (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2000), 131, 185-187.

⁵⁶ Sonika Gupta, "US sanctions against China and Pakistan – Who stands to gain?" Internet. Available at <http://www.ipcs.org>.

⁵⁷ Nair.

⁵⁸ Chris Gagné "Nuclear Risk Reduction In South Asia: Building on Common Ground" n.p., On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.stimson.org/asia/pdf>.

⁵⁹ Jones, 34-35.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 87-104.

⁶¹ "India steps up pressure on Pakistan" 15 Dec 2001, BBC News. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

⁶² Jean Dreze, "The Warped Logic of Nuclear Gambles", The Hindu, 27 May 2002.

⁶³ Jasjit Singh, "Why Nuclear Weapons?" in *Nuclear India*, ed. Jasjit Singh (New Delhi: The Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, 1998), 14.

⁶⁴ Perkovich, 87. Also see K Subrahmanyam, "Indian Nuclear Policy: 1964-98," in *Nuclear India*, ed. Air Cmde Jasjit Singh, (New Delhi: The Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, 1998), 27.

⁶⁵ Ashok Kapur, *Pokhran and Beyond: India's Nuclear Behaviour* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 123.

⁶⁶ Pratap Bhanu Mehta, *A Nuclear Subcontinent: Understanding the Anxieties of South Asia*, n.p., On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.theharvardmagazine.org>. Also see Charles Krauthammer, "Clinton's China Grovel", quoted in Mohan Malik, "Nuclear India: Rationale and Implications", in Desmond Ball and Mohan Malik, *The Nuclear Crisis in Asia: The Indian and Pakistani Nuclear Programmes* (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, 1998), 14. "There is nothing quite like US-China strategic partnership to put the fear of God in India."

⁶⁷ Stanley A. Weiss, *Why does the US trust China with nuclear weapons and not India?* Opinion, The Asian Age, On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.asianage.org>.

⁶⁸ Malik, 14. "China is determined to fight India to the last Pakistani."

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⁶⁹ Brahma Chellany, "Regional Proliferation: Issues and Challenges", in *Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia: The Prospects for Arms Control*, ed. Stephen Philip Cohen (Boulder, C.O.: Westview Press, Inc.,1991) 306 & 308.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 12.

⁷¹ Newt Gingrich, quoted in Barbara Conry "U.S. "Global Leadership": A Euphemism for World Policeman" . Policy Analysis, CATO Institute. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.cato.org/>. "The US has become de-facto, the voice of the international community. Being the sole superpower, the rest of the Western world is content to let the US do the policing. We have to lead the world. If we don't lead the world I think that we have a continuing decay into anarchy, I think we have more and more violence around the planet, and I think it is highly unlikely anybody will replace us in leadership roles in the next 30 years."

⁷² Harrison, Los Angeles Times, 12 Sep 2000.

⁷³ G. Parthasarathy, "Politics of Non-Proliferation: A flawed, unjust N-treaty", The Tribune, India, 20 Jun 2000.

⁷⁴ Mehta.

⁷⁵ Edward T. Fei and Adam M. Scheinman, " US Nuclear Disarmament and Restrictions in the 1990s" in *Pulling Back from the Nuclear Brink* ed. Barry R. Schneider and William L. Dowdy , (Portland: Frank Cass & Co, 1998), 175-188.

⁷⁶ Ibid.,180. and Maleeha Lodhi, "Assessing Nuclear Negotiations with the US", *Defence Journal*. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.defencejournal.com/>. "From the South Asian perspective, it is clear that there is virtually no prospect of reversing the nuclear and missile programs of either country. Therefore, the parameters set out by Security Council Resolutions 1172, requiring India and Pakistan to halt and reverse their programs and to adhere, not only to the CTBT and the yet-to-be-negotiated FMCT (Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty) but also the NPT - as non-nuclear states - are unrealistic and totally unfeasible in terms of addressing the security and political issues created by the nuclearization of South Asia and thus could hardly become the basis of dialogue between the US-led world community and the two South Asian countries."

⁷⁷ Opinion: The Voice of the Nation, "A Message for Gen Musharraf " The Washington Times, 31 Dec 2001.

⁷⁸ Mehta.

⁷⁹ Sudha Ramachandran, "Musharraf in need of allies on Kashmir" Asia Times, On-line, Internet, Available from <http://www.atimes.com/ind-pak/>.

⁸⁰ *Pakistan Briefing*, Islamabad/Brussels, International Crisis Group,12 March 2002, On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.intl-crisis-group.org/>.

⁸¹ Rajesh Kumar Mishra "Terrorism and Pakistan: US Still Evading The Truth?" On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.saag.org/>

⁸² "Head of al-Qaeda operations hiding in Karachi: New York Times" Press Trust of India, 01 Nov 2002.

⁸³ Aly Lakhany and Jim Fisher-Thompson "President Musharraf Shares Vision for Pakistan During U.S. Visit: Distinguishes between Islamic and Theocratic State" Washington File Staff Writers for US Dept of State, International Information Programs, 13 Feb 2002 On-line, Internet. Available from <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/nea/sasia/>.

⁸⁴ Tony Karon, "Why the U.S. Anti-Terror War is a Crisis for Pakistan" Time Online Edition, 15 Sep 2001. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.time.com/>.

Chapter 2

India's Nuclear Strategy

India's Draft Nuclear Doctrine

In the face of strong international pressures to clarify its objectives, the Indian government affirmed that India would behave as a responsible nuclear power and promised to enunciate a nuclear doctrine that would corroborate this claim. In Aug 1999, The National Security Advisory Board (NSAB), a body formally affiliated with India's National Security Council, produced a draft Indian Nuclear Doctrine. Reflecting a retaliation-only policy, it called for substantial new capabilities to provide and survivable nuclear forces, "robust" command and control mechanisms including space-based early-warning, communications and damage-assessment systems. The doctrine also calls on India to develop an "integrated operational plan" for nuclear use and a "triad of aircraft, mobile land-based missiles and sea-based assets." India's nuclear weapons should be able to shift from "peacetime deployment to fully employable forces in the shortest possible time" and be able to "retaliate effectively" following a first-strike, the doctrine concludes. The doctrinal statement appeared to justify not the minimum credible deterrent promised by India's national leadership but a large, complex, and potentially open-ended nuclear arsenal.¹

The release of the doctrine did not do much to relieve the anxieties of the international community.² The report turned out to be highly controversial when it was released. It caused a great deal of unease in Pakistan.³ It was also commented upon unfavorably by the other nation it

was ostensibly targeted against, China.⁴ Many Indian security specialists and commentators ridiculed it for a variety of reasons.⁵ Somewhat fazed by the strong criticism from all quarters, the Indian Government sought to downplay the report as a temporary draft meant for discussion and debate.⁶ Till date this report remains the only official document that states India's nuclear strategy policy. Its status is not clear and remains only as a draft. Subsequent to the release of this doctrine, there have been many occasions on which the Indian government has attempted to clarify its position, but these clarifications have not yet resulted in any clear statement of intent.⁷

India's nuclear desired force posture has never been spelled out in any detail by New Delhi. To add to the problem, there have been a horde of analysts, think tanks and assorted arm chair experts who have since speculated on what the true Indian nuclear policy might be and consequently, the direction the Indian Strategic decision makers might take. These experts, many of whom are retired bureaucrats and military officers, have offered a wide range of nuclear doctrines as appropriate for India's strategic circumstances⁸ In spite of a number of official statements relating to nuclear issues appearing recently, there have been none that addresses any of the critical issues of interest to analysts of nuclear deterrence. This, by itself, should not be surprising since most Indian leaders usually describe India's nuclear doctrine only in very general terms. This emphasis on generality probably represents a conscious and deliberate choice on the part of its policy makers. On the other hand, it can be explained by the perception that, barring a few, an Indian politician or bureaucrat is completely ignorant of security matters, hence the lack of specifics.⁹

As discussed earlier, the draft Indian Nuclear Doctrine is by no means the last word on the subject. It can be assumed safely that the final product may not even distantly resemble this draft. Any discussion of India's emerging nuclear doctrine is therefore fraught with uncertainty.

To begin with, this uncertainty arises because India is still at the initial stages of developing a nuclear deterrent. Since this will be a long, drawn out process—probably requiring at least a couple of decades to mature—a multitude of imponderables could intervene to either modify the currently contemplated doctrine or change the pace and direction of India’s nuclear posture in the future. India, as a nuclear ‘late-comer’, is faced with a peculiar situation with regards to nuclear technology and doctrine for its use. The experience of the older nuclear powers was that technological breakthroughs, often unforeseen, caused doctrinal innovations.¹⁰ In India’s case, international and domestic pressure has compelled it to expound appropriate doctrine well before all the technological requirements are available or may be available in the future. Therefore, credible minimum deterrence, which could mean a gradual slide from dissembled nuclear weapon components to fully ready-to-launch capability over a long period of time, probably represents a position that finds support across the political spectrum.¹¹

India’s Nuclear Weapon Policy

India’s tryst with nuclear weapons has the characteristic of a love-hate relationship. Nuclear weapons are abhorred at the moral level while being wholeheartedly embraced at a more realistic if not pragmatic level. The divide amongst the intelligentsia and the lay alike is along these lines. The other dimension to the debate centers on the economics of having a nuclear weapon capability. The tests of 1998 only brought once again into focus, the choices that India had been wrestling with since independence. Broadly, the choices available to India were:

- Completely renounce the nuclear option and maintain a nuclear weapon free South Asia.
- Keep the option weaponization open without actually exercising it.
- Acquire a “recessed deterrent”.

- Openly pursue the nuclear option and develop a reliable and ready to use weapon capability.

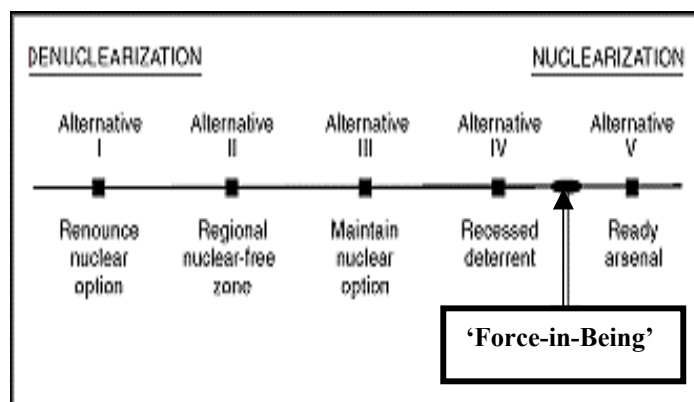
Immediately after the 1998 tests, international pressure on both India and Pakistan focused on the first option.¹² However, within India, it was felt that the first option was no longer available. In a sense, the “Rubicon” had been crossed. In fact, the tenor of public pronouncements, both official and otherwise hinted at India having “burnt its boats behind her” in order to deflect any discussion involving a ‘roll-back’ of the nuclear program. The burden of the discussion centered on the last three options. In fact, in the euphoria surrounding the aftermath of the tests, the proponents of a “recessed deterrent”¹³ and the ‘overt’ nuclear arsenal outnumbered the advocates of the first two options, those who argued that acquisition of a nuclear force was a bad thing, both morally and strategically.¹⁴

The strategic enclave¹⁵ in India is split over the third and last alternative. The backers of the “recessed deterrent” option argue that it would allow India to constitute a nuclear arsenal as and when required and this ought to suffice.¹⁶ The benefit of this alternative, they argue is that, that by threatening to deploy nuclear weapons would serve as a powerful incentive for global nuclear arms reductions and to secure preferential economic and political gains for India. In contrast, the proponents of the last alternative argue that with the tests, the nuclearization had started and there was no halting till a fully weaponized status was achieved. To return to a non-nuclear status would be strategically disastrous, they argue.¹⁷

The Force-in-Being: Between “Ready Arsenal” and “Recessed Deterrent”

The options available to India can be depicted on a continuum as shown in the figure below. The two options shown on the left of figure call for India's de-nuclearization, either through a renunciation of the nuclear option or the development of regional arms control

arrangements with Pakistan and China. The middle position is India's traditional stance of keeping the nuclear option open--neither publicly endorsing nor rejecting the creation of nuclear weaponry. India's 1998 decision to pursue a nuclear posture in the form of a “force-in-being”¹⁸ is a compromise between the two options on the right end of the spectrum: a ready arsenal and a recessed deterrent.



**The Spectrum of India's Nuclear Options and Its Emerging
Nuclear Posture¹⁹**

A ready arsenal would involve creating a nuclear force consisting of a sizable inventory of weapons that are maintained in military custody in peacetime and ready for immediate use. In contrast, a recessed deterrent would involve developing various elements needed for an effective deterrent without actually producing a standing nuclear force. The force-in-being implies that India's nuclear capabilities will be strategically active, but operationally dormant, giving New Delhi the capability to execute retaliatory actions within a matter of hours to weeks. Such a capability will allow India to gain in security, status, and prestige, while simultaneously exhibiting restraint. India will acquire a nominal deterrence capability against Pakistan and

China, while avoiding both the high costs of a ready arsenal and any weakening of its long tradition of strict civilian control over the military.

The nuclear posture that the policy makers may opt for would probably lie between a “recessed deterrent” and a ready arsenal, given the contours of India’s overall national strategy. This posture has some benefits, which in India’s view far outweigh any negative consequences. Firstly, it frees India from outright nuclear blackmail from either China or Pakistan. However, as we shall see later, in one case related to Kashmir, this does not hold true. Secondly, the “restraint” shown by India would earn it ‘brownie points’ from the international community. Thirdly, this arrangement strengthens the civilian control over the armed forces by deliberately keeping the armed forces out of the decision making loop.²⁰ Fourthly, this option would be economically manageable. An overt and deployed posture, implying extensive and expensive weapon stockpiles along with the attendant command and control (C2) infrastructure, will certainly prove prohibitively expensive.²¹ Lastly, unless something dramatic occurs in the future, this posture could be maintained indefinitely and regulated as required depending on the economy and the security situation. This posture would require a nuclear capability that is not so far operationally ready as to require expensive storage (silos) and command and control systems. At the same time, the weapons can be made ready for use in a relatively short time.

This capability would be reflected in the form of completed nuclear weapons stored in a disassembled condition, i.e., warheads along with the sub-assemblies and delivery systems being kept at different locations separated by large geographical distances. The warheads and the sub-assemblies would be kept under civilian control while the delivery systems like missiles or aircraft are kept under military control. The missiles would most probably be kept in rear storage

areas (not deployed) while the aircraft are deployed for peacetime or operational requirements. Dispersal would aid survivability in the event of an enemy first strike. The mating of the warheads and the delivery system and their subsequent/concurrent deployment could possibly serve as a tool for a strategy of escalation if necessary.²² The size, shape and location of the nuclear force would therefore be largely hidden from scrutiny. It would be cloaked, rightly so, in deception and denials so as to ensure the safety and survivability of the force in the event of enemy first strike attack. It is certain that the command of nuclear assets would be firmly with the executive, i.e., the Prime Minister and/or his cabinet. Interestingly, the custody of the warheads would be with civilians, i.e., the scientists and engineers responsible for preparing the weapons while the delivery systems would be in the custody of the armed forces.²³

India's declared policy on the use of nuclear weapons is one of "no first use" but an "assured and massive retaliation" in case of nuclear aggression on the part of its enemies.²⁴ At the same time, India continues to press for global disarmament and elimination of nuclear weapons.²⁵ India's signing of the CTBT and the NPT is subject to the condition that the nuclear states formally renounce their arsenals and move towards disarmament and eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons, a difficult if not impossible solution. This policy can be traced to firstly, India's reading of the situation in Asia and in South Asia in particular and secondly, to India's stand that nuclear weapons are morally indefensible.²⁶ A concatenation of historical events of the near and distant past and the evolution of a new international geo-political order have shaped the current situation in Asia as India sees it. Domestic compulsions, in the form of national security concerns- external and internal, economics and coalition politics had and will continue to have, a significant influence on the nuclear policy. These shall be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

India's Nuclear Options Revisited

Strategic Thought and Culture

To most India watchers, the nuclear tests of 1998 appeared to reflect India's lack of strategic foresight. The economic sanctions coupled with the ban on the transfer of key technologies had the effect of cooling the most ardent of pro-nuclear hearts. To add insult to the injury, Pakistan also conducted its own tests, returning the situation to status quo, albeit on a different square of the strategic chessboard. It is indeed puzzling then as to why India went in for the tests when it did, when the country knew fully well that these consequences would surely follow. All the more because if India had contemplated a military action against Pakistan over the latter's involvement in Kashmir, Pakistan could not very well blackmail India with the threat of a nuclear retaliation, as it is doing now.²⁷ It is easy to attribute this apparent strategic blunder to the absence of a 'strategic culture' in the Indian leadership.²⁸ However, the western concept of strategic culture, defined by writings, treatises, discourses, debates and the like did not exist in India for a considerable period of time.²⁹ Moreover, eastern cultures have long understood strategy in a different sense than is¹ defined by the Clausewitzian school.³⁰

To be fair, India has had only a little over 50 years to craft together a durable and focused security strategy, and a little over 25 years to evolve a nuclear doctrine.³¹ There is also a section of opinion that strategic thinking per se is deleterious to India's democracy and economy.³² The example of the cold war rivalry between the US and the USSR which resulted in the abuse of national security through secrecy, flawed military interventions and spiraling defense expenditure.³³ While India may be found lacking to some extent in a durable military strategy, the strategic vision propounded by its founding fathers has served it well.³⁴ The Nehruvian

approach to international politics was based on national autonomy, which emphasized a rule-based system, which would benefit lesser, independent states like India, as opposed to a force-based system that the cold war symbolized. Nehru's rejection of the realpolitik of the cold war and the adoption of non-alignment and multilateralism therefore has to be seen more in terms of a strategic vision than strategic naiveté. India's nuclear program fits into this prescription for India's sovereignty and autonomy.

India's Nuclear Doctrine

There is no accepted definition of "doctrine" in modern strategic thought. In the West, the concept usually refers to those "fundamental principles by which military forces or elements thereof guide their actions in support of national objectives."³⁵ The old Soviet definition may in fact be more appropriate here, since the concept of doctrine was understood expansively as a hierarchic structure of principles that is anchored fundamentally in the grand strategic objectives and the material capabilities of the state. The Soviet General Staff journal, *Military Thought* defined doctrine as "Military doctrine has two aspects, political and military-technical. The basic tenets of a military doctrine are determined by a nation's political and military leadership according to the socio-political order, the country's level of economic, scientific and technological development, and the armed forces' combat material, and with due regard to the conclusions of military science and the views of the probable enemy".³⁶ This definition of doctrine is closer to the Indian security establishment's views on the use of the armed forces of the country. Further, this approach reinforces the political control of the military and its uses, leaving the military and the bureaucracy to work out the details according to the broad planning guidelines spelled out by the political leadership. The emerging nuclear doctrine, therefore, first and foremost, has to be seen not as a rules etched in stone but as a debate that would seek to

answer the core question of what purposes are served by the acquisition of nuclear weapons and, thereafter, address all the important but nonetheless subsidiary issues pertaining to force posture, concepts of operations, and weapons employment etc. In so doing, India's nuclear doctrine can be seen as an evolving system of beliefs that governs the rationale and use of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear Weapons as Political Tools.

From a study of India's draft nuclear doctrine, it is clear that India considers that nuclear weapons are, first and foremost, political instruments rather than military tools.³⁷ There is nothing new in this; all nuclear weapon states have always considered nuclear weapons as the ultimate political weapon. While the cold war protagonists have considered war as "politics by an admixture of other means" nuclear weapons therefore had their uses as weapons of war. In other words they believed that a nuclear war could be fought and won.³⁸ India on the other hand strongly believes that given the destructive power of nuclear weapons, a nuclear war cannot be won and therefore must never be fought.³⁹ Therefore, nuclear weapons are to be understood only as political instruments and not weapons as in *nuclear* weapons, primarily because they are emphatically not usable weapons in any military sense. Indian strategic leadership maintains that nuclear weapons cannot be used, must not be used, and will never be used as instruments of war fighting by New Delhi.⁴⁰ Nuclear weapons, in the Indian context are seen as pure deterrents than as implements of war. Because these weapons embody enormous destructive capability, a capability often greater than that required by most rational ends of politics, they are perceived as having relatively low utility in those situations where all the antagonists possess similar technologies. In asymmetrical situations however, nuclear weapons are seen as the ultimate weapons of coercion or blackmail. It was precisely to offset this situation that India proceeded to conduct the nuclear tests and declare itself a nuclear power.⁴¹

Most Indian analysts feel that India ought not to mimic the cold war theology of assured destruction and the highly risky and totally non-viable policies of nuclear deployment followed by the US and the USSR. India's strategic situation is different from what the US and the USSR faced, especially when both nations were in the process of building up their nuclear arsenals. Unlike the super powers, who developed their nuclear arsenals during a period of intense superpower rivalry, India has set out to develop a nuclear capability at a time when the global strategic environment is much less intense and when there is a much clearer recognition that any nuclear use would be highly escalatory and therefore "should not be initiated."⁴²

Further, unlike the United States during the Cold War, India does not suffer any conventional inferiority vis-à-vis either Pakistan or China.⁴³ Since it is therefore unlikely to be at the receiving end in a conventional conflict with either of these two states, it is spared the imperatives of thinking about nuclear weapons as usable instruments of war fighting which may have to be employed in extremis to stave off potential defeat on the battlefield.⁴⁴ This by no means eliminates the problems of responding to the first-use of nuclear weapons by India's adversaries, but at least this obstacle represents a different class of challenges than that arising from the need to use one's own nuclear weapons first because of serious conventional weaknesses in the face of a highly revisionist threat. The only object of concern here is India's own security and given its, at least nominal, conventional military superiority vis-à-vis both Pakistan and China (in the theater), the only contingency left for nuclear weapons to service is that of immunization to blackmail arising from either an adversary's threat of nuclear use or the political exploitation of their own nuclear assets in some relatively abnormal political circumstances.

India's simple, perhaps even simplistic, conception of the value of nuclear weapons thus derives fundamentally from the fact that the country does not face any onerous security challenges that require a more expansive view of the utility of nuclear weaponry. Confirming similar sentiments about the limited utility of nuclear weapons to India, Prime Minister Vajpayee concluded too summarily that New Delhi "do[es] not intend to use these weapons for aggression or for mounting threats against any country; these are weapons of self-defense, to ensure that India is not subjected to nuclear threats or coercion."⁴⁵ Thus, with the view that nuclear weapons are exclusively political instruments rather than military tools the Indian nuclear doctrine should ensure at least in the near term that India's nuclear posture is deterrent in nature⁴⁶

In refusing to treat "deterrence" as an outcome that is best assured by developing various strategies of "defense," like preemptive attacks, limited nuclear options, or robust strategic defenses, India adhered to the traditional view of existential deterrence for a long time prior to 1998.⁴⁷ After the tests of 1998, India has merely moved sideways from existential to minimum deterrence.⁴⁸ Even those who suggest that India continue develop and build a sizeable nuclear arsenal justify it on the grounds of enhancing the credibility of deterrence rather than in support of any sustained nuclear war fighting strategy. Most Indians are content to eschew any nuclear weaponry that might even hint of a willingness to contemplate a war fighting posture, and this sentiment is shared both by critical decision-makers within the Indian government and even the top brass of the Indian armed forces today.⁴⁹ Since India's preferred outcome is thus defined solely in terms of deterrence (understood as a rejection of defense in the context of the deterrence-defense continuum), the possession of even a few survivable nuclear weapons capable of being delivered on target, together with an adequate command system, is seen as sufficient to preserve the country's security. The very recognition that India possesses nuclear weapons

suffices to ensure that all “aggressive acts” would be adequately deterred even without the promulgation of any particular doctrine of deterrence. Prime Minister Vajpayee echoed these exact sentiments when he declared in Parliament that the “fact that we’ve become a nuclear weapons state should be a deterrent itself.”⁵⁰

The fact still remains that senior Indian security managers have deliberately maintained an acute silence about all the details relating to India’s nuclear capabilities, doctrine, and force posture. They would rather leave it to the imagination of others in an effort to exploit whatever deterrence benefits can be accrued from the projected opacity, and ambiguity. Breakdown of deterrence is rarely discussed as a possibility and even then not in terms of India’s options thereafter. More emphasis is paid to preventing a breakdown from ever occurring. Even these turn out to be little other than either reiterated justifications of why India needs a minimal, but credible, nuclear deterrent or pleas to the international community to restrain India’s adversaries, particularly Pakistan.⁵¹

Understanding India’s Assessment of Deterrence

The Indian approach toward deterrence stands in sharp contrast to the ‘massiveness’ of the nuclear doctrine exhibited by the United States during the Cold War. India, in contrast, appears content to settle for a simpler set of nuclear capabilities, while maintaining a comparative silence about many of the details pertaining to its ability to retaliate. This response is quite logical since India seems satisfied by the belief that even a delayed, or ‘ragged’ nuclear response should deter its adversaries, given that this riposte would inflict more damage than is worth any of the political objectives sought by its competitors.⁵² Understanding this is critical to comprehending the hows and whys of India’s evolving nuclear doctrine and force posture. In a way it suggests that, no matter how serious the increase in Pakistani and Chinese nuclear

capabilities may be, New Delhi believes that it faces a reasonably manageable geopolitical environment; including the prospects for nuclear use by India's adversaries. As we shall see, this belief is not entirely out of place.

Deterrence Vis-à-Vis Pakistan

Most would agree that the most likely threat or use of nuclear weapons against India would emerge from Pakistan, not China. The Indo-Pakistani rivalry is characterized by a high degree of routine violence with its central focus being an active struggle over mutually coveted territory linked to national pride; and it involves a weak, paranoid state in conflict with a larger and more capable neighbor. Given these considerations, conflict (even between any two nations in the same situation) is likely to produce an escalation by nuclear brandishing by the weaker state and, in the extreme, even some kinds of nuclear use.⁵³ Escalation could conceivably be a rational choice in some instances, motivated by “national honor, the desire to harm and weaken those who represent abhorred values, and the belief that the other will retreat rather than pay the price which can be exacted for victory.”⁵⁴ In addition, conflicts can take on a dynamic of their own which makes escalation difficult to predict or control. “Although undesired escalation obviously does not occur all the time, the danger is always present. The room for misunderstanding, the pressure to act before the other side has seized the initiative, the role of unexpected defeats or unanticipated opportunities, all are sufficiently great—and interacting—so that it is rare that decision makers can confidently predict the end-point of the trajectory which an initial resort to violence starts”.⁵⁵

Despite the challenges posed by such a contingency, New Delhi, rightly or wrongly, appears to be not overly exercised by the problem of Pakistani nuclear use for three reasons. First, it is unlikely that India will ever pursue any military option that places Pakistan in a

situation where the latter feels it has no alternative but to use its nuclear weapons in anger. Second, even if Pakistan uses its nuclear weapons extensively against India, the stark geographic vulnerabilities of the former imply that even a relatively small Indian residual reserve would more than suffice to destroy Pakistan as a functioning state. The Pakistani posture therefore is a paradox. Its nuclear posture rests on the assumption that the only way to counter India's size and might rests in acquiring a first-strike nuclear capability. This posture, if exercised, will inevitably result in complete destruction as Pakistan cannot survive even the second strike option that the Indian nuclear doctrine has reserved for itself. Third, it is increasingly believed that even in the context of a limited conventional war, a nuclear-armed Pakistan will not be able to actually use its nuclear weapons with impunity against India. While a nuclear use may be threatened for political signaling, it is felt that Pakistan is unlikely to do so. The attendant costs would be prohibitive and far in excess of any perceived benefit even in the context of a limited confrontation. The threat of uncontrolled escalation, which would devastate Pakistan far more than it would India, is as a restraint on any Pakistani propensity to cross the nuclear threshold. Pakistan's standing as a nation would be doomed because the international community is unlikely to forgive Pakistan for breaking the nuclear taboo, no matter how hard she tries to justify a first-strike.

Therefore, India can afford to be a little less concerned about the threat of use of the nuclear by Pakistan than what is generally believed. On the whole, India's reluctance to start a conflict, its significant record of never initiating a conflict on the sub-continent, Pakistan's vulnerability to an Indian nuclear retaliation and international pressure would ensure, irrespective of what she may threaten, Pakistan simply cannot afford to risk a nuclear confrontation with

India. Any nuclear exchange, while being certainly painful for India, would simply obliterate Pakistan.⁵⁶

Deterrence Vis-à-vis China

In contrast to India's position and similar to that of Pakistan, China maintains the right of 'first use' vis-à-vis India. Even then, the strategic scenario in the Chinese context does not appear too threatening to India's interests. Sino-Indian relations, despite the 1962 Sino-Indian war and a number of border incidents over the last fifty years, has never involved the routinely high levels of violence that exist in the Indo-Pakistani case. Even China's support for Pakistan (during the 1971 war and after) has not caused a great deal of anxiety. Sino-Pak relations are accepted as part of the realpolitik of the South Asian region.⁵⁷ China has laid claim to about 34,000 square miles (90,000 sq km) of Indian territories in the eastern sector while occupying parts of the Aksai Chin that lie within the northern Indian states of Jammu and Kashmir, including some territory ceded to it by Pakistan from Pakistan Occupied Kashmir.⁵⁸ For all practical purposes, however, New Delhi is reconciled to this occupation, since the more valuable real estate claimed by China, in the eastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, is already under effective Indian control. In contrast, the dispute over Aksai Chin, where China controls a modest portion of territory claimed by India, represents an area of greater value to Beijing because of the critical land-line of communication between Xinjiang and Tibet that happens to run through this region.

The character of the respective Chinese and Indian occupations, therefore, produces a certain equilibrium from the perspective of stability. To China, Aksai Chin in the western sector (which it already occupies) is strategically vital to its security interests, although it claims that the eastern sector is crucial to the solution of the border issue. To India, the eastern sector (which

it already occupies) is strategically vital to its security interests, although it claims that Aksai Chin is crucial to the solution of the border issue. As a result, neither state has any real incentives either to give up the areas each currently occupies nor to usurp control over the areas currently held by the other. Although Beijing's refusal to abdicate its claims over the eastern sector often rankles India, it is quite clear that to India that these holdings are simply not considered to be *intrinsically valuable* to Beijing, at least in a way that they are to India. To China, these territories do not represent the political equivalent of Taiwan or Hong Kong and, therefore, Beijing has not considered it worth their reintegration through the threat or use of force.⁵⁹ Thus, what is intrinsically valuable for India is simply marginal for China. In addition, India has developed a robust conventional military capability designed explicitly to frustrate Chinese attempts, if any, at altering the status quo in the Indian northeast through forcible means. However, China could use its superior nuclear capabilities to neutralize Indian conventional defenses in an effort to wrest control of these territories, as some Indian analysts often fear.⁶⁰ In the light of the prior discussion, one may be constrained to ask "why would Beijing risk a war (conventional if not nuclear) over territories it considers ephemeral to its strategic calculations in order to change the status quo in this area."⁶¹

The Chinese refusal to formally retract its claims over this territory does serve the purpose of needling India, and more understandably, functions as a bargaining chip useful to secure New Delhi's consent to Beijing's claims over Aksai Chin. There is clearly some difference between asserting territorial claims for psycho-political advantage and threatening an armed conflict, which involves nuclear use, for the purpose of recovering what are otherwise simply marginal territories.⁶² Not surprisingly, then, Beijing appears content to pursue the former course of action. And New Delhi, in turn, has judged correctly that the prospects of Chinese

nuclear first-use in support of a conventional offensive designed to recover these territories are minimal. This is despite Beijing's overall nuclear superiority and the otherwise ongoing Sino-Indian strategic competition, since the value of the disputed territories for China does not in any way warrant issuing nuclear threats, let alone using nuclear weapons first, against India.

Therefore, when India maintains that its nuclear capability is based on the strategic challenge posed by China, it is not a question of Chinese aggression or threat that warrants the creation of an Indian nuclear force, but only the need for a stable Asian balance of power. Other Indian observers have refined this rationale further by noting that the presence of Indian nuclear weapons vis-à-vis China ought to be viewed primarily as a hedge against the "strategic uncertainties" in Beijing's future political direction.⁶³ Consequently, these weapons exist principally to provide political "insurance" and in their absence, the nuclear asymmetry between India and China would make for an unequal relationship, to the detriment of India's interests.

The Overall Deterrence Posture

The strategic scenarios vis-à-vis both Pakistan and China therefore pose relatively modest strategic problems for New Delhi. Given the nuclear and conventional weapons capability from the Indo-Pak or the Sino-Indian standpoint, the threat of an all out nuclear war between India and Pakistan or between India and China is less than what is popularly believed. The fact that India has a dyadic relation with either neighbor and both are nuclear powers place India in a position where it is required to have comparable capabilities for purposes of deterrence and self-assurance.

As discussed earlier, there is a lower than perceived threat that either Pakistan or China would use their nuclear weapons in anger against India. This implies that India may not have to rely very heavily on its nuclear assets to counter either threat, albeit for different reasons. In the

case of Pakistan, given its geography and structural weaknesses⁶⁴, it is unlikely though not impossible, that Pakistan would use its nuclear weapons in any manner other than in a token fashion. In the case of India and China, despite China's overwhelming nuclear superiority, any first strike by China would trigger an Indian response. This would cause unacceptable damage even if the riposte were small.⁶⁵ This would imply that nuclear weapons were not, in any sense so vital to India's security as was being portrayed. Therefore the nuclear option was chosen to satisfy some other need or needs. 'Abundant caution' could be a reason. Being risk averse, Indian policymakers preferred to acquire nuclear weapons for purposes of both deterrence *and self-assurance*. As one analyst puts it "while [nuclear] deterrence may be fragile, absence of [nuclear] deterrence will make the situation even more fragile."⁶⁶ India's policy makers have therefore come to the conclusion that while nuclear deterrence is a must, given the capability and the intent of its neighbors, it does not warrant investment in a large operationally deployed nuclear force.

This posture singularly distinguishes it from both Pakistan and China. India considers nuclear weapons as political tools against blackmail and never to be used as a weapon. This emphasis grows directly out of the belief that the absolute, rather than the relative, performance of these weapons, coupled with the horrendous consequences of even limited use, more than suffices to make them potent deterrents against any threat. Pakistan considers them as weapons, to be used in circumstances of dire need, a sort of "last resort". This is a result of Pakistan's perceived strategic inferiority vis-à-vis India and its ever-present fears of being overwhelmed by conventional Indian military action. Both factors together have created greater incentives for Pakistan to systematically integrate nuclear *weapons* into its operational military planning.⁶⁷

China on the other hand treats nuclear weapons both as political tools to be used against blackmail and as a weapon to be used if necessary against a superior power.

Operational Implications of a Deterrent Posture

Doctrinal Mismatch. While it may be good to treat nuclear assets as political rather than military weapons at the strategic level, it can become self-defeating when considered at the operational level. This involves three aspects to the problem of choosing a doctrine that fits best. Firstly, there is the problem of doctrinal conflict between the opponents. India's doctrine of deterrence locates it at the *deterrence* end of the deterrence-defense continuum; Pakistan's (and to a certain extent, China) avowed 'first use if threatened' policy would place it at the *defense* end of this continuum. This poses a dilemma for India's policy makers. Deterrence presupposes rationality. However, in some situations, a country that employs an offensive nuclear policy may be tempted to go to extraordinary lengths (or irrationally) to confront its deterrent professing opponent with a choice of either capitulating or risking a nuclear exchange and thereby suicide.⁶⁸

There is every possibility then that Pakistan and/or China may seek to create situations that would force India to engage in a nuclear exchange or surrender. This would be then nuclear coercion that counters deterrence. Secondly, deterrence breakdown could occur as a result of miscalculation, desperation in the face of a severe military defeat or catalytic causes. The last reason could come about if, during an ongoing conventional war results in some unexpected and significant success for the attacker, a success that threatens the existence of the defender as a viable state. Thirdly, deterrence could also breakdown despite good intentions on the part of India and her adversaries. Given the consequences that Pakistan faces in the event that she launches a pre-emptive strike on India, the chance of deterrence breaking down as a result of a

pre-meditated attack in the Indo-Pakistan context is unlikely. Deterrence breakdown despite the best intentions of all concerned therefore has to be catered for in the nuclear doctrine.

The Utility of the ‘No First Use’ Policy

This emphasis on no-first-use is remarkably pervasive in Indian strategic thought. It was officially proposed to Pakistan first in 1994 as a formal arms control measure and it has been affirmed since by leading Indian political leaders on several occasions in Parliament. This commitment was reiterated in Parliament personally by Prime Minister Vajpayee who spelled out its two components: the no-first-use of nuclear weapons against nuclear states coupled with the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states, by avowing that India “will not be the first to use the nuclear weapons. Having stated that, there remains no basis for their use against countries which do not have nuclear weapons.”⁶⁹

There is little doubt that the no-first-use policy remains an unverifiable tenet of New Delhi’s operational policy. In the Indian context this is likely to be verifiable for several reasons. First, it is consistent with India’s nuclear doctrine at the declaratory level, its traditional attitudes to nuclear disarmament, and its established refusal to legitimize nuclear weapons as ordinary instruments of war. Second, it allows New Delhi to underscore its pacific intentions vis-à-vis Pakistan and China and thereby procure all the political benefits that accrue from being perceived as a moderate, responsible, and peace-loving state in the international system. Third, it is consistent with the emerging Indian nuclear posture which, taking the form of de-alerted and de-mated components to create a force-in-being rather than a ready arsenal, provides at least some assurance (though not conclusive proof) that India is not committed to the rapid, including first, use of nuclear weapons in the event of deterrence breakdown. Fourth, and most importantly, it is unlikely to be violated because India’s strategic circumstances are favorable

enough so as to prevent New Delhi from ever having to use nuclear weapons *first* against any of its adversaries.

Nuclear Weapons as Instruments of Punishment

Since India's nuclear weapons cannot be *used* to resolve the problem of nuclear coercion and will not be *used* to underwrite either territorial or political expansionism, they can only serve either as insurance against the threats of use by its adversaries or as punishments if these weapons are in fact employed against India.⁷⁰ The adherents of the assured destruction school advanced this conception of nuclear weapons as instruments of punishment during the Cold War because they believed that the horrendous character of nuclear weapons only allowed them to be used for purposes of deterring conflict through the threat of inflicting catastrophic damage should deterrence fail. In the event of deterrence failure, each antagonist might inflict a genocidal level of damage on the other, but it was precisely this fear of annihilation that was expected to shore up the structure of deterrent threats and prevent the outbreak of hostilities.⁷¹ It was realized, of course, that the act of retaliation in the face of a prior nuclear attack might be absurd, irrational, and possibly even immoral, since the retaliatory response could not undo the catastrophic damage already suffered by the defendant nor could it procure any positive gains of its own.⁷² All retaliation could do was intensify the catastrophe through an act of vengeance, pure and simple. While an attacker could hope that the defendant, seeing the sheer irrationality of striking back, would refrain from responding in kind, he could not *count* on the defendant being restrained by any concerns about rationality—and fears of compounding the catastrophe that would be unleashed by such retaliation were supposed to prevent the initial shot from being discharged in the first place.⁷³

As the “Draft Report of [the] National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine” phrased it, “any nuclear attack on India and its forces shall result in punitive retaliation with nuclear weapons to inflict damage unacceptable to the aggressor.”⁷⁴ This implies that Indian retaliation would occur only *after* the country has absorbed i.e., suffered, a nuclear first strike at the hands of its adversaries. Given India’s unique strategic needs and its limited resources, Indian policy makers constantly emphasize the concept of “retaliation only.”⁷⁵ Therefore, retaliatory punishment for a nuclear attack, would more or less describe the objective of India’s nuclear policy even though in effect refers to a second-strike posture and not one of pure “recessed deterrence”.⁷⁶ There is little reason to believe otherwise when India maintains that the most appropriate nuclear use policy is one that treats nuclear weapons as deterrents suitable only for punishment. This is because India simply does not possess the capabilities to utilize its nuclear weapons in either an offensive or defensive mode. An offensive use of nuclear weapons would require a large nuclear arsenal and incredibly accurate delivery systems maintained at high levels of readiness, a real-time intelligence gathering capability, a highly automated mission planning system, and robust strategic defenses capable of coping with the ragged retaliation that will inevitably follow in the aftermath of any attack. It would also require great proficiency in planning complex offensive military operations. Developing such a strategic infrastructure would be extraordinarily costly and would involve high levels of military participation⁷⁷ These are exactly the outcomes Indian policymakers are keen to avoid and therefore, will not encourage the pursuit of such strategies. A nuclear use posture that focuses on punishment alone needs smaller numbers, less sophisticated nuclear weapons and simpler standard operating procedures. It also allows higher levels of civilian custody and control and, most importantly, will impose lesser economic penalties to achieve the required deterrence.⁷⁸

Minimum Deterrence Force Levels

We can now summarize the discussions up to this point and attempt to quantify what would constitute credible minimum deterrence. After the tests of 1998, India has merely moved sideways from *existential* to *minimum* deterrence. From the options available to it, India would in all probability opt for a nuclear posture in the form of a “*force-in-being*” which implies that India's nuclear capabilities will be strategically active, but operationally dormant. This would give her capability to execute retaliatory action within a matter of hours to a few weeks. India's draft Indian Nuclear Doctrine is by no means the last word on the subject. India's nuclear doctrine and should be seen as an evolving system of beliefs that governs the rationale and use of nuclear weapons.

India's declared policy on the use of nuclear weapons is one of “*no first use*” but an “*assured and massive retaliation*” in case of nuclear aggression on the part of its enemies. In keeping with this policy, avoiding the high costs of a ready arsenal and to reinforce its long tradition of strict civilian control over the military, India would try to acquire only a *nominal deterrence* capability against Pakistan and China. This “*de-alerted*” capability would be reflected in the form of completed nuclear weapons stored in a dissembled condition, i.e., warheads along with the sub-assemblies and delivery systems being kept at different locations separated by large geographical distances.

India considers that nuclear weapons are, first and foremost, *political* instruments rather than *military* tools and therefore nuclear weapons, in the Indian context are seen as *pure deterrents* than as implements of war. India strongly believes that a nuclear war cannot be won and therefore must never be fought. India believes that even a delayed, or ‘ragged’ nuclear response should deter its adversaries. India maintains that its nuclear capability is based on the strategic challenge posed by China and on the need for a stable Asian balance of power. Any

nuclear exchange, while being certainly painful for India, would simply obliterate Pakistan. There is a possibility that Pakistan and/or China may seek to create situations that would force India to engage in a nuclear exchange or surrender. Deterrence breakdown, intentional or despite the best intentions of all concerned therefore has to be catered for in the nuclear doctrine.

What would then constitute a credible minimum deterrence? There have been analysts who have attempted to quantify this with varying results. The estimated number of nuclear bombs varies between 125-150 of 15-20 kiloton (KT) capacity.⁷⁹ As far as delivery systems are concerned, strategists have talked about a triad of delivery systems - aircraft, land-based ballistic missiles and submarine-based ballistic missiles.⁸⁰ India has the aircraft to deliver bombs, though they have to be equipped for the purpose. Land-based missiles would complement the air force. The mix of aircraft and missiles will depend on the targeting policy that would be followed while the number of nuclear-powered submarines would be based on the degree of assurance required that India will possess an effective retaliatory capability.⁸¹

Keeping in mind India's posture, it is felt that there is no need for India to replicate the expensive systems of the nuclear powers of the West.⁸² With a no- first-use policy and to posit a credible deterrence, communication systems have to be hardened to withstand the electromagnetic pulses generated by an adversarial nuclear first strike. There will be a need to deploy sensors to monitor the enemy's intentions and nuclear posture, which will require high-resolution satellites. A decision on what an adequate C3I should comprise is a hard choice. If India chooses to be economical, then the retaliatory capability will suffer a loss of credibility. However, if it opts for a more robust system, the result could impose a heavy financial burden, which may detract from conventional military capability.⁸³

Notes

¹ *The Draft Report on the Indian Nuclear Doctrine*. On-line, Internet. Full text available at http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/CTBT/nuclear_doctrine_aug_17_1999.html.

² Deepa M Ollapally, "India's Strategic Doctrine and Practice" in *India's Nuclear Strategy*, ed. Raju G.C. Thomas and Amit Gupta (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2000), 70.

³ For a good example of Islamabad's reaction, see "Pakistan Reacts Strongly to India's assertion," *The Times of India*, August 19, 1999; "Pak to Raise Nuclear Doctrine Issue at UN," *The Asian Age*, August 28, 1999; and "Foreign Secretary's Press Briefing on India's Nuclear Doctrine, August 19, 1999," On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.fas.org/news/pakistan/1999/990819-pak-pr2.htm>.

⁴ "India's proposed nuclear doctrine likely to figure in Sino-Russian talks," *The Hindustan Times*, August 25, 1999.

⁵ Kanti Bajpai, "A Flawed Doctrine," *The Times of India*, September 7, 1999; P. R. Chari, "The Nuclear Doctrine," August 24, 1999, On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.ipcs.org/issues/articles/252-ndi-chari.htm>

⁶ "Jaswant Rejects U.S. Concern," *The Hindu*, August 20, 1999; "India Not to Engage in a N-Arms Race: Jaswant," *The Hindu*, November 29, 1999.

⁷ Ashley J. Tellis, "India's Emerging Nuclear Doctrine: Exemplifying the Lessons of the Nuclear Revolution", NBR Analysis, On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.nbr.org/>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Shri Jaswant Singh, "Defending India", (Bangalore: Macmillan India, 1999), 109 "So marked is resistance to change here, and so deep the mutual suspicions, inertia and antipathy, that all efforts at reforming the system have always floundered against a rock of ossified thought. Many strategic experts and defence analysts have commented upon the absence of a strategic culture in India. Largely, the politicians and bureaucrats lack the insights necessary for managing security and defence affairs. HM Patel, a former Defence Secretary (from 1947-1953) has stated that, "the ignorance of the civil servants in India about military matters is so complete that we may accept it as a self-evident and incontrovertible fact." Also George Tanham, "Indian Strategic Culture" *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 1, reproduced in *Indian Defence Review*, April 1992. Article was based on research done for RAND Corporation.

¹⁰ Tellis

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Perkovich, 435-437

¹³ The convener of India's National Security Council, Jasjit Singh, coined the term "recessed deterrence". Recessed deterrence meant that, although India had the capability to build nuclear weapons, it did not necessarily have a nuclear weapons program. The recessed capability need never surface because any state contemplating nuclear coercion against New Delhi would have to factor India's nuclear weapons potential into its strategic calculus.

¹⁴ Praful Bidwai, "Sign the Test Ban Treaty," *The Times of India*, 14 Jul 1998; Praful Bidwai, "Regaining Nuclear Sanity," *The Times of India*, 05 Jun 1998.

¹⁵ Perkovich, 473 n2. "Itty Abraham has offered a precise and useful definition of the "strategic enclave" as comprising an inchoate collection of retired civil and military officials, media persons belonging to the genre of defense correspondents, rightwing politicians, and scientists in the nuclear and defense establishments. What binds them together is a common faith in the pursuit of a militaristic approach to national security, a "realist" foreign policy, and the value of nuclear weapons. In truth, "strategic enclaves" can be found in all countries."

¹⁶ Brahma Chellaney, "Nuclear-Deterrent Posture," in Brahma Chellaney (ed.), *Securing India's Future in the New Millennium*, (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1999), 141-222.

¹⁷ S.Chandrashekar, "In Defense of Nukes," *The Economic Times*, May 17, 1998; M. D. Nalapat, "India Needs to Expand Scope of Nuclear Diplomacy," *The Times of India*, December 18, 1998.

¹⁸ The term "force-in being" has been coined by Ashley J. Tellis and is used in his publication "India's Emerging Nuclear Posture: Between Recessed Deterrent and Ready Arsenal", Rand Research Brief, RB-63. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.rand.org/>. Printed form: Same title, (Santa Monica, Rand Publications: 2001) p 250.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Perkovich, 450-451. "Prime Ministers and the scientific leaders of the nuclear establishment have concluded that the militarization of nuclear policy would lead to excessive demands for resources and risks of arms racing that, in the end, would not make the state any more secure than it is without a deployed nuclear arsenal". This is echoed by Neil Joeck, "Nuclear Relations in South Asia," in Joseph Cirincione, ed., *Repairing the Regime: Preventing the*

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Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000), 140-141.

²¹ In the case of the US, the expenditure on its nuclear weapons related programs cost an excess of \$ 5 Trillion. This figure has been quoted in Ollapally, 77. Also refer Stephen Schwartz, ed, "Atomic Audit: The Costs and Consequences of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Since 1940" (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1998). In India's case, the total is estimated at \$ 2.5 Billion including 400 strong IRBM force along with the associated C3I systems. This figure honestly looks too low and could be closer to \$ 40 billion says Amit Gupta, "A Nuclear Arms Control Agenda" in *India's Nuclear Strategy*, ed. Raju G.C. Thomas and Amit Gupta, (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2000), 279.

²² Harold Feiveson, ed., *The Nuclear Turning Point: A Blueprint for Deep Cuts and De-alerting of Nuclear Weapons* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1999), 34.

²³ W.P.S Sidhu, "India's Nuclear Use Doctrine" in *Planning the Unthinkable* ed. Peter R.Lavoy, Scott D.Sagan, and James J. Wirtz, (New York: Cornell University Press, 2000), 154-155.

²⁴ Draft Report on the Indian Nuclear Doctrine. "India will not be the first to initiate a nuclear strike, but will respond with punitive retaliation should deterrence fail..... any nuclear attack on India and its forces shall result in punitive retaliation with nuclear weapons to inflict damage unacceptable to the aggressor".

²⁵ "India is a nuclear weapon state. This is a reality that cannot be denied. It is not a conferment that we seek; nor is it a status for others to grant. It is an endowment to the nation by our scientists and engineers. It is India's due, the right of one-sixth of humankind. Our strengthened capability adds to our sense of responsibility; the responsibility and obligation of power. India, mindful of its international obligations, shall not use these weapons to commit aggression or to mount threats against any country; these are weapons of self-defence and to ensure that in turn, India is also not subjected to nuclear threats or coercion. In 1994, we had proposed that India and Pakistan jointly undertake not to be the first to use their nuclear capability against each other. The Government on this occasion reiterates its readiness to discuss a "no-first-use" agreement with that country, as also with other countries bilaterally, or in a collective forum. India shall not engage in an arms race. India shall also not subscribe to reinvent the doctrines of the Cold War. India remains committed to the basic tenet of our foreign policy - a conviction that global elimination of nuclear weapons will enhance its security as well as that of the rest of the world. It will continue to urge countries, particularly other nuclear weapon states to adopt measures that would contribute meaningfully to such an objective." *Extract from the Paper laid on the table of the House on the Evolution of India's Nuclear Policy*, Lok Sabha, 27 May, 1998. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.indianembassy.org/>.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Sidhu, 144-145. "During the Kargil conflict in 1999, the erstwhile Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif threatened to use the "ultimate weapon" and warned of "irreparable losses" if India crossed the line of control in Kashmir in its action to evict Pakistani intruders." In subsequent instances, Pakistani leaders have hinted rather readily that they (Pakistan) would not hesitate to use nuclear weapons if the situation so warranted. See Rashmee Z. Ahmed "Musharraf ready to use N-weapons against India" *The Times of India*, 06 Apr 2002 "Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has "threatened India with the atom bomb" in the event of war over Kashmir whose "blood runs in our hearts", in an interview published in the German magazine *Der Spiegel*."

²⁸ Ollapally, *India's Nuclear Strategy*, 69. See George Tanham, "India's Strategic Thought: An Interpretive Essay", On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.rand.org>. and in printed form (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1991).

²⁹ Ollapally, *India's Nuclear Strategy*, Ibid.

³⁰ Giri Deshingkar, Essay No. 35 "Strategic Thinking in Ancient India and China: Kautilya and Sunzi" in *Across the Himalayan Gap* ed., Tan Chung, (New Delhi, Gyan Publishing House: 1998).

³¹ India conducted its first 'peaceful nuclear explosion' (PNE) in 1974 under the stewardship of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

³² Ollapally, *India's Nuclear Strategy*, Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 71.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Department of Defense, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Washington, DC: USGPO, 1984, 113.

³⁶ Raymond L. Garthoff, "Deterrence and the Revolution in Soviet Military Doctrine" (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1990), 37-40.

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- ³⁸ Colin S. Gray, "Nuclear Strategy and National Style" (Maryland: Hamilton Press, 1986), 48-49, 70-71.
- ³⁹ Jasjit Singh, Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Jasjit Singh, "Nuclearization of South Asia" in *Arms Control in the Asia-Pacific Region*, ed. Jeffrey A. Larsen and Thomas D. Miller, (Colorado: USAF Institute for National Security Studies, US Air Force Academy: 1999), 250-251, 260-261.
- ⁴² K Subrahmanyam, "A Nuclear Strategy for India", On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.fas.org/>.
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- ⁴⁴ Jasjit Singh (ed.), *Nuclear India*, 289-291.
- ⁴⁵ Extract from the Paper laid on the table of the House on the Evolution of India's Nuclear Policy, Lok Sabha, 27 May 98. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.indianembassy.org>.
- ⁴⁶ "India's posture would be at the deterrence end of the "deterrent-defense continuum" For a discussion on the subject of deterrence and defense, read Glenn H. Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 3-51.
- ⁴⁷ Gaurav Kampani, "From Existential to Minimum Deterrence: Explaining India's Decision to Test". The Nonproliferation Review/Fall 1998. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.cns.mii.edu/>.
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- ⁴⁹ Raj Chengappa, "Pakistan Threatened India with Nuclear Attack During Kargil War: Army Chief," The Newspaper Today, 12 Jan 2001.
- ⁵⁰ "PM Declares No-First Strike," *Indian Express*, August 5, 1998.
- ⁵¹ "Kargil shouldn't bias Western view of India's N-policy: George" The Times of India 21 Jul 99.
- ⁵² Ashley J. Tellis, "India's Emerging Nuclear Doctrine: Exemplifying the Lessons of the Nuclear Revolution."
- ⁵³ Devin T. Hagerty, *The Consequences of Nuclear Proliferation: Lessons from South Asia* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998), 6.
- ⁵⁴ Robert Jervis, *The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), 135.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., 140.
- ⁵⁶ Martin J. Wojtyasiak, "Preventing Catastrophe: US Policy Options for Management of Nuclear Weapons in South Asia", Maxwell Paper No. 25 (Maxwell AFB, Air War College: 2001).
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- ⁵⁸ Lincoln P. Bloomfield and Allen Moulton "Cascon Case ICB: India-China border 1954-62 MIT" Cascon System for Analyzing International Conflict: 1999. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.web.mit.edu/>. "The 1962 border war between India and China culminated in China seizing about 38,000 square kilometers (14,670 sq mile) of Indian territory in Aksai Chin, as well as another 5,180 sq km (2,000 sq miles) of northern Kashmir that Pakistan later ceded to Beijing under a 1963 pact."
- ⁵⁹ Ashley J. Tellis, et al, *Sources of Conflict in the 21st Century: Regional Futures and U.S. Strategy*, 148-64.
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- ⁶¹ K Sundarji, "Changing Military Equations in Asia: The Role of Nuclear Weapons" in *Bridging the nonproliferation divide: the United States and India* Francine R. Frankel (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, Center for the Advanced Study of India, 1995), 138.
- ⁶² Ashley J. Tellis, et al, *Sources of Conflict in the 21st Century: Regional Futures and U.S. Strategy*, 148-64.
- ⁶³ Amitabh Mattoo, "India's Nuclear Policy in an Anarchic World," in Mattoo (ed.), *India's Nuclear Deterrent*, (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1999) 18-19.
- ⁶⁴ Neil Joeck, *Repairing the Regime: Preventing the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, 141.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶⁶ K. Subrahmanyam, "The Nuclear Bomb: Myths and Reality," The Economic Times, June 22, 1998.
- ⁶⁷ Zafar Iqbal Cheema, *Planning the Unthinkable*, 158-81.
- ⁶⁸ Colin S. Gray, *Nuclear Strategy and National Style*, (Maryland: Hamilton Press, 1986), 107.

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⁶⁹ “India evolves nuclear doctrine,” *The Times of India*, August 5, 1998; “PM declares no-first strike.” Vajpayee’s statement, and Indian policy in general on this issue, therefore, directly contradicts the conclusion drawn by one analyst who argued that “moreover, if the [Indian] ‘no first use’ offer is not taken up and no agreement is reached, then clearly India reserves the right of nuclear first use, particularly against those countries that have not even entered into discussion on the subject.” See W. P. S. Sidhu, “India sees safety in nuclear triad and second strike potential,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, vol. 10, no. 7 (July 1998), 25.

⁷⁰ Ashley J. Tellis, *India’s Emerging Nuclear Doctrine: Exemplifying the Lessons of the Nuclear Revolution*.

⁷¹ Scott D. Sagan, *Moving Targets: Nuclear Strategy and National Security* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989) For more on the subject, see Bernard Brodie, *Escalation and the Nuclear Option*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), Robert Jervis, *The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), Robert Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution: Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) and McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years*, (New York: Random House, 1988).

⁷² Ashley J. Tellis, *India’s Emerging Nuclear Doctrine: Exemplifying the Lessons of the Nuclear Revolution*.

⁷³ Glenn Snyder, “The Balance of Power and the Balance of Terror” in *The Balance of Power* ed. Paul Seabury, (San Francisco, Chandler: 1965), 184-201.

⁷⁴ “Draft Report of [the] National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine,” 2.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ashley J. Tellis, *India’s Emerging Nuclear Doctrine: Exemplifying the Lessons of the Nuclear Revolution*.

⁷⁷ Raju G.C. Thomas, “India’s Nuclear and Missile Programs” in *India’s Nuclear Strategy*, ed. Raju G.C. Thomas and Amit Gupta (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2000), 106-119.

⁷⁸ K Sundarji, *Bridging the nonproliferation divide: the United States and India*, 78-193.

⁷⁹ C. Rammanohar Reddy, *The Wages of Armageddon – II*, *The Hindu*, Monday, 31 Aug, 1998. “Gen. Sundarji, for instance, arrived at a figure of 150 based on the assumption that deterrence would require the ability to devastate five cities in Pakistan and 10 in China, each with three bombs. After taking into account losses in a first strike from an adversary, an Indian second-strike capability would require an arsenal of closer to 150 warheads. A recently declassified U.S. State Department telegram to the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi in 1966 refers to “(the former AEC official) Sethna’s own figure of 150 bombs for a credible deterrent.” Jeetendra Mishra calculates that India needs to develop and deploy 165 nuclear weapons of 50 KT yield, 70 weapons of 20 KT yield, 200 Agni 2/3 missiles, and 35 Prithvi 2/3 missiles to maintain the deterrence posture sought in the draft nuclear doctrine. Jeetendra Mishra, *Pokharan II and Beyond (Emerging Indian Nuclear Posture)*, Research Report, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: April 2001.

⁸⁰ Reddy, *The Wages of Armageddon – II*.

⁸¹ Reddy, Ibid. The general view is that the Indian triad would need five nuclear-powered submarines.

⁸² Reddy, Ibid. “There is substance in the view that there is no need for India to replicate the expensive systems of the nuclear powers of the West, which were trying to develop structures to “win” a nuclear war. While some more money has certainly to be spent in India, the ongoing process of modernisation of the conventional forces is going to provide command shelters and satellite communication that can be integrated into a nuclear force. And that the incremental outlay needed will not be very large.”

⁸³ Reddy, Ibid. “In the end, an Indian weaponisation programme may well force on the country an expensive C3I system which itself, may cost ‘as much as a good medium-sized army’.”

Chapter 3

Stability and Safety in South Asia

Kashmir, Pakistan and the Indian Dilemma

As discussed so far, India's security interests would be best served by, firstly, maintaining a nuclear posture that is close to a 'recessed' deterrence, ensuring that this deterrence is credible and backed by conventional forces capability, and lastly, by reaffirming its 'no first use' policy. The ownership of a nuclear arsenal entails more onerous considerations. The posture selected has to match with the country's threat perceptions and its capacity to obtain and maintain that posture. Not only has the posture to be credible, more importantly, it has to be seen to be credible. If the overarching concern is nuclear stability and safety on the subcontinent, then the Indian (or Pakistani) leadership is obligated to its citizens on two counts, economic prosperity on one hand and safety from inadvertent nuclear conflict on the other. Given Pakistan's fears and absence of democratic checks and balances in its governance, India has to take the initiative to keep its nuclear limited to a minimum that is sufficient for its security needs. Simultaneously, India needs to restore communications with Pakistan. Though it may seem a come down for India, it has to be remembered that in many respects Pakistan is like an insecure and petulant child with a persecution complex.¹

The situation can therefore be summarized as follows. The key to a lasting peace in the sub-continent is the resolution of the Kashmir issue on mutually acceptable terms to India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir. Both nations have powerful incentives to establish a

peaceful and economically beneficial relationship, but the intransigence of the Kashmir issue makes that possibility at the moment seem very remote indeed. Pakistan continues to, in spite of US pressure, actively sponsor the low intensity war in Kashmir.² India has been tolerating this for close to two decades now but its patience is slowly beginning to run out.

While India has been pointing out to the world at large Pakistan's involvement in sponsoring terrorism in Kashmir and other parts of the world, it was largely ignored.³ After the events of 11 Sep 2001, the situation changed, though not in the way India would have hoped. Though the US and the rest of the international community have tacitly acknowledged the Indian position, there has not been enough pressure applied on Pakistan to stop sponsoring terrorism in Kashmir. This is because the US needs Pakistan's help in the on-going war against the al-Qa'ida group in Afghanistan.⁴ The war on terror has temporarily given Pakistan a degree of immunity from being penalized for its involvement in Kashmir. It is however, extremely doubtful whether its hard line government or the pro-fundamentalist interest groups in Pakistan have used or would use this breathing space to further the cause of peace in Kashmir.

A case in point was the recent suicide attack on the Indian Parliament allegedly by Pakistani sponsored terrorists. This act caused India to mobilize its armed forces in a bid to threaten Pakistan with punitive military action if it continues to harbor and sponsor terrorism from inside its borders. However, Pakistan mobilized its own forces and threatened to use its nuclear option if India resorted to military action either across the LoC in Kashmir or the international border.⁵ International pressure added to desist India from taking the threatened military action against Pakistan. After more than nine months of an uneasy and dangerous confrontation, India decided to withdraw its troops from the border.⁶ The situation has returned

to square one. Pakistan continues to sponsor terrorists in Kashmir and India is forced to accept the consequences of this proxy war.⁷

This then highlights the dilemma that India faces. There is apparently no light at the end of the tunnel for Kashmir till Pakistan gives up its claim on it. Pakistan will not give up its efforts to annex Kashmir and can afford to continue its proxy war indefinitely. India has run out of options to force Pakistan to stop its support for the insurgency in the valley. The only issue therefore is whether India can absorb this indefinitely. There is no *deus ex machina*, and ironically, no sword to cut this *Gordian knot* in the Asian sub-continent except for the two protagonists themselves *or* the US. Therefore, for the stability and safety of the sub-continent, the first step is to resolve the Kashmir issue, failing which, India has to accept the situation as exists with regards to Kashmir. The only hope for India is a changed attitude of the US towards Pakistan once its aims in Afghanistan are broadly met and as soon as such a situation obtains, the anti-terrorism operation would be turned towards Pakistan and its support for terrorist activities in Asia and elsewhere.⁸

Sino-US Relations and South Asia

Both the US and China have long-term strategic interests in South Asia. The emergence of China as the only major power that can challenge the US in the near or medium-term is worrying to both the US and India.⁹ Therefore, it is in the interests of both countries to forge a strategic alliance to check any extra-territorial ambitions that China may have either in South Asia or elsewhere. In other words the US will need India, which has the potential to play a major role in Asia, as a strategic counterweight to China.¹⁰

China has been and will continue to be, a supporter of Pakistan. Just as the US needs a counterweight to China, China has been cultivating Pakistan as a strategic counterweight to

India's ambitions in South Asia. China worries that an unfettered India would be free to use its preeminent position as a regional hegemon, thereby impeding its own ambition to be the preeminent power in Asia, if not the world.¹¹ Therefore, to expect China to pressure Pakistan into desisting on the Kashmir issue and building peaceful relations with India would be unrealistic, whatever China's public pronouncements may be.¹² However, if Pakistan's role in promoting terrorism is not checked, there is every danger of these terrorists getting involved in or initiating separatist movements in China's western provinces bordering the Central Asian Republics.¹³ Therefore, China has some interest in dissuading Pakistan from persisting with its present course of action. How strong the motive is depends on how the situation evolves with regard to the spread of Islamic fundamentalism across the Central Asian region.

Though the US may pressure Pakistan to halt terrorist infiltration into Kashmir, it also expects India to restore normalcy and a legitimate government in Kashmir.¹⁴ The recent elections in Kashmir, reportedly free and fair, is a hopeful sign.¹⁵ India should now exploit this and increase diplomatic pressure on Pakistan. The roles of the US and China are vital in this regard, as they have considerable leverage with Pakistan. To get China to put pressure on Pakistan, India may have to make some strategic concessions, which may involve considerable but not insurmountable domestic opposition. These may include recognition of the Chinese occupation of Aksai Chin in return for the Chinese recognition of the MacMahon Line in north eastern India.¹⁶

Nuclear Risk Reduction

Stability-Instability Paradox. Possession of nuclear weapons by two equally armed adversaries should by itself be stabilizing through mutual deterrence. However, this situation contributes to a condition called 'the *'stability-instability'* paradox. The argument goes like this: Nuclear

weapons by themselves tend to lower the probability of escalation in a conventional war. To that extent that this is “*stability*”. This makes conventional war less dangerous but paradoxically more likely and therefore creates “*instability*”.¹⁷ Indeed, nuclear weapons provided the backdrop for the several Cold War confrontations between the superpowers that occurred through their proxies in various theaters like Vietnam and Afghanistan. As Paul Bracken notes “The trick was to put the burden of escalation on the other side...ironically, having nuclear weapons probably encouraged these low-level torments, precisely by ensuring that Americans and Russians would stop just short of shooting at each other.”¹⁸ The Kargil conflict of 1999 was a classic example of this.¹⁹

When Pakistan sent in its troops to occupy territory in the Kargil area of Kashmir, it calculated that India would try to prevent the incursion, and in order to do this, would have to use its military, including air power. There was then every likelihood that the conflict would escalate as India may be tempted to cross the LoC to cut the supply routes to the invading troops. This in turn would allow Pakistan to claim that India was violating the LoC and step up its involvement accordingly. If the Indian response became unmanageable, Pakistan would then threaten the use of nuclear weapons to safeguard its territory. While check mating India, this ploy would facilitate an *alarmed* international intervention. The resulting speedy termination to the conflict would leave Pakistan holding on to the strategic heights it had occupied around Kargil. It would also have a more significant and desirable outcome for Pakistan, the Kashmir issue would be internationalized as never before.²⁰ A similar situation obtained after the 13 Dec 2001 attack on the Indian parliament. The Kargil conflict and the recent military standoff between the two countries therefore seems to suggest that Pakistan would not hesitate to resort to nuclear

brinkmanship.²¹ Therefore, there is a case for adopting measures to reduce the risk of a nuclear conflict.

Nuclear Risk Reduction Measures. Apart from a political solution or the lack of it, there are some essential elements of safeguards in nuclear posturing that are essential in order to prevent an accidental war involving nuclear weapons. The safety and security of the nuclear arsenals, both in terms of accidental detonation of a warhead and the prevention of these weapons from falling into the wrong hands, is also absolutely vital. The measures that reduce the risk of an accidental nuclear war, an inadvertent detonation or a custodial mishap are integral to the overall nuclear policy of a nation. In the context of the subcontinent, with its inherent dangers of escalation and the lack of developed institutional safeguards make the design and implementation of nuclear risk reduction measures (NRRM) all the more urgent and essential.²² NRRMs have two essential, separate but interdependent components, viz., confidence building measures (CBMs) and nuclear restraint.

Confidence Building Measures

Discussions on CBMs have been regular features of the dialogue between India and Pakistan. On paper, there exists at least seventeen CBMs.²³ However, the history of official CBMs is replete with alleged betrayals by both countries on numerous occasions. Instead of restoring confidence, as was the original intent, these have reportedly become tools of manipulation and deceit. There was little trust to start with; the nuclear dimension has only worsened the situation.²⁴

The track record of the CBMs between India and China has been better, but still leaves a vast scope for improvement. The Sino-Indian war along India's northern and eastern borders with China resulted in China occupying large areas of Indian territory in Aksai Chin. When

China announced a unilateral cease-fire, it withdrew its troops 25 km from the Line of actual control (LAC) to create a demilitarized zone. In the east, both sides agreed to respect the LAC without prejudice to future border settlement.²⁵ There was no improvement in bilateral ties till 1976, when full diplomatic ties were restored between the two countries. After some renewed territorial misunderstandings and heightened tensions in the eastern sector, both countries felt the need for a dialogue. Relations between the two improved dramatically after the visit to China by the then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1988.²⁶

The border question remained unresolved but the two countries nevertheless went ahead with negotiations on CBMs to avoid unwanted conflict and to provide the basis for increased cooperation. The setting-up of the Joint Working Group (JWG) to settle the border issue and to promote peace and tranquility along the border was the start of the process of increasing the cooperation. The JWG has negotiated a number of measures to reduce the tensions between the two countries; mainly military but significantly some economic and people-to-people exchanges at the official level²⁷, a feature conspicuously absent between India and Pakistan. Both sides have since negotiated a series of military conflict avoidance and communication measures.²⁸

Lessons from the Cold War. The experiences of the super powers in nuclear risk reduction, whilst it may not apply in the Sino-Indian-Pakistan context, are nevertheless worth considering, especially in the Indo-Pakistani case²⁹. These can be summarized as follows:

- A formal agreement *not to change the status quo*, e.g., the Helsinki Accord (1975). The Simla Agreement³⁰ and the Lahore Declaration provide the basis for reaching a common understanding. Pakistan needs to understand that a change in status quo (of Kashmir) will neither happen in the way she wants nor will the international community allow it.³¹

- A tacit agreement to avoid *brinkmanship*. Kargil embodied the efforts by Pakistan to use its deterrent to achieve its geo-strategic objectives in a territorial dispute. Negative statements designed for domestic audiences, by leaders on both sides also escalate bilateral crises and constitute a form of verbal brinkmanship, should be avoided.
- A formal agreement to minimize or avoid *dangerous military exercises*. An agreement exists in the India–Pakistan context prohibiting military aircraft from flying within specified distances of the border, which is generally being observed. An agreement to prevent incidents at sea involving naval vessels is envisaged in the MOU that accompanied the Lahore Declaration.
- The prior notification of *missile launches*. This was also catered for in the MOU, and the agreement was envisaged to be converted into a treaty.
- *Trust* in the faithful *implementation* of treaty obligations and confidence-building measures. The key element of trust is missing in the India–Pakistan situation. One example would be the use of hotlines to convey misleading information or their disuse in crisis situations.
- Reliance on one’s own monitoring capabilities largely premised on “national technical means.” This is currently beyond the capabilities of India and Pakistan, but could soon become available to India within its ambitious space research program.
- Establishing *reliable and redundant* command and control arrangements. This, too, was included in the MOU. Little is known in the public domain about what arrangements are available or are being contemplated by the two countries. Except for some discussion on having a secure National Command Authority and National Command Post and identifying the authority to take ultimate decisions on nuclear war

and peace issues, there is little visibility about present or future command, control, communication, and intelligence arrangements.

- Upgrade and strengthen existing risk-reduction measures in quiet times and after crises. This is unexceptional advice for all adversarial countries.

Unilateral and Bi-Lateral Measures India and Pakistan could unilaterally pursue other risk-reduction measures at this stage when their nuclear capabilities have not matured, despite the absence of a dialogue. Some are included in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that accompanied the ill-fated Lahore Declaration. The MOU ³² enjoined the two countries:

- To provide each other with advance notification in respect of ballistic missile flight tests.
- To abide by their respective unilateral moratorium on conducting further nuclear test explosions.
- To undertake a review of the existing communication links...with a view to upgrading and improving these links and to provide for fail-safe and secure communications.
- To undertake national measures to risks of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons under their respective control.

There are some measures that both countries can at least agree to consider.³³ Some of these are:

- An agreement on how their nuclear capabilities would be designed for deterrent purposes, but not war fighting.
- The need for a common language to understand each other's signaling, such as sounding different states of alert in an emergency, is of supreme importance to defuse future crises and avoid conflict.

- There is also the question of some agreement on what impermissible action(s) would invoke a nuclear response.³⁴
- A degree of opacity no doubt strengthens the deterrent, but the complete lack of transparency could lead to serious misperceptions and miscalculations.
- Most importantly, the need for appreciating the reality of nuclear asymmetry would have to be accepted to avoid nuclear arms racing. Pakistan would need to accept the fact that India's nuclear capability has to be designed against Pakistan and China, just as India would have to accept that China's nuclear capability must configure to the United States and Russia. Strict parity would be unrealistic in the light of differing security perceptions, and seeking this goal could lead to an unrestrained arms race.

A lesson is that CBMs cannot be forced upon parties that are still infused with such raw emotion and mistrust. An important lesson is that the emphasis of Indian and Pakistani leaders on declaratory measures is not that productive in an atmosphere devoid of trust. A no-first-use policy is low on substance and difficult to verify without intrusive measures to demonstrate a reduced state of readiness, including keeping warheads separate from delivery vehicles and other indications of recessed deterrence. What are needed are nuclear risk reduction measures that are specific, substantive and easily verifiable. As mentioned earlier, improving mutual confidence and trust in the political domain is the first order of business for creating effective CBMs. Thus, establishing even a modicum of trust is necessary in order to stabilize their adversarial relations. The two countries must rethink the process of CBM measures as necessary for the resolution of their conflicts.³⁵

Third Party Mediation

The problem that defies solution is Kashmir. This is the issue that needs to be resolved if the continuing hostility between the two nations has to be eliminated or reduced. There is however, little or no common ground for both countries, either bilaterally or with the help of a third party, to work on. Third party mediation has been mooted at various times to help India and Pakistan settle the Kashmir question. While Pakistan is keen on involving a third party, preferably the West (read the US) in Kashmir, India is adamant that it is purely a bilateral issue and a third party is not welcome.³⁶ It is not as if India is averse to third party mediation on any issue. It has in the past accepted third party mediation. The Indus Water Treaty (World Bank) and the Rann of Kutch (UK) are the only instances of third party mediation between India and Pakistan.

There are as discussed earlier, numerous CBMs whose success have not inspired confidence. More than any other single event in the past, Kargil has effectively frozen whatever hope of dialogue on any issue between the two countries. Then came the military coup by the one person thought to be behind the Kargil misadventure, General Pervez Musharraf. After initially refusing to entertain any dialogue with a military dictator, India agreed to a summit meeting between the leaders of the two countries with a hope of resurrecting the stalled dialogue process. However, the Agra Summit of Aug 2001 did not go off well and the talks failed to reach any accord, primarily because of Pakistan's insistence that before resolving any issue, Kashmir be addressed first. India's stand that Pakistan's position amounted to interference in India's internal affairs meant that the talks were doomed to fail.³⁷ The attack on the World Trade Center in New York effectively put the question of resumption of the stalled dialogue on the back burner as Pakistan scrambled to salvage its position with the US. The final nail into the coffin of

the long dead dialogue was driven in on 13 Dec 2001 when Pakistani sponsored militants carried out a suicide attack on the Indian Parliament. The ensuing military standoff is history.

The unstated and publicly unrecorded views of the State Department: that the only viable solution to the intractable problem of Kashmir is to formalize the LoC as the International Border.³⁸ Here again, the view in Indian government circles is that despite the upturn in its equation with the United States, it is not wise to formally agree to any third party role because this will immediately lead to Pakistan proclaiming victory for its long held position.³⁹ Indian officials believe that, for the time being, international pressure on Pakistan to rein in the *jihadis* will help “solve” the Kashmir problem. The US for the time being will not exert too much pressure on Pakistan in view of the ongoing operations in Afghanistan against al-Qa’ida. However, the recent ‘free and fair’ elections in Kashmir have put the onus of stopping militant activity in Kashmir back on Pakistan.⁴⁰

Right since its inception, the Government of India has been averse to the thought of international intervention, interference, or even interest, in the Kashmir issue.⁴¹ For quite some time now, India has taken recourse to the Simla Agreement and emphasized bilateralism because India has never really been sure that the world, by and large, accepted the legitimacy of its control over Kashmir.⁴² Several unilateral steps could be taken by India that would help New Delhi to overcome its hesitation. These steps would make the acceptance of a third party role easier, and in the long run, advantageous. A third party option is already being proposed in media circles⁴³. The Simla accord, with its endorsement of a bilateral solution to the Kashmir issue, was viewed as a great gain for India. Today, the very concept of a strictly bilateral approach is outdated and shortsighted. If a bilateral accord on Kashmir were somehow signed, to what extent could India trust Pakistan to uphold its end of the agreement in perpetuity?. Any

settlement requires third party involvement for it to have legitimacy and staying power in light of Pakistan's uncertain political future.⁴⁴

Another fundamental problem with a bilateral approach to resolving the Kashmir issue is that it can only work in a lasting fashion between equals. Two nations do not necessarily need to be of the same size but they have to have political and constitutional systems that are comparable in their stability and consistency. This situation has not emerged in Pakistan and there is no reason to believe that Pakistan is even moving in such a direction. Therefore should India move ahead, with the support of the international community, to find a solution to the Kashmir issue? If a proactive, diplomatic approach succeeds, the gains would be tremendous. If such an approach does not succeed, India could then revert to its waiting game hoping to outlast Pakistan.⁴⁵

It is in India's interest to engage third parties. Pakistan still reiterates its demand for third party mediation on Kashmir, and thus would be hard-pressed to reject this approach. Pakistan knows that if such a process were to start, the logical outcome would be that the LoC would become an international border, negating Pakistan's efforts at annexing Kashmir. Pakistan has reason to be therefore grateful for India's opposition of third party involvement. Now, India has everything to gain and Pakistan more to lose in the event of third party involvement. President Bill Clinton virtually endorsed the LoC as an international border when he said in Islamabad in March 2000 that, "History will not reward those who try to forcefully redraw borders with blood."⁴⁶

Given the heightened mutual distrust, bilateral talks with Pakistan are unlikely to transform the LoC into an international border. Talks with Pakistan *and* a third party are likely to be more effective in clarifying the unreality of Pakistan's stated goals for Kashmir. It would not

be difficult for Indian government officials to defend third party involvement politically. Indeed, it would be easier to generate public support for third party involvement than for a resumption of bilateral dialogue with Musharraf. Recent history shows that America does not hesitate to bring itself into the South Asia picture when it perceives that to be necessary. In the aftermath of Kargil and now the 11 Sep 2001 incident, India should feel more confident about Washington being a prospective third party. India should appreciate that the US has not in recent years spoken about self determination for the Kashmiri people nor the United Nations resolutions.⁴⁷ India and the United States are now working together in various fields and have set up joint working groups on terrorism and Afghanistan.⁴⁸

Given the difficult nature of the Kashmir dispute, any likely settlement would need to be underwritten by the United States for it to stand the test of time. Mediation under the patronage of the US could be undertaken by a mutually acceptable third party say, Norway. Special envoys—trusted people appointed by the Indian and Pakistani governments respectively—could meet in Norway, a safe distance away from the pressure of politics and hawks. Some important questions remain. Would Pakistan give up its “bleed India” policy even if a facilitator manages to help negotiate the conversion of the LoC into an international border? The chances of it doing so are greater if a third party raises the costs of noncompliance. India has often indicated its willingness for a settlement that restores greater powers to the state and addresses the issue of Kashmiri alienation. India’s desire to restore peace to the region has been demonstrated by allowing international representatives to oversee the electoral process and by doing so, India has strengthened its international position.⁴⁹ The pressure is on Pakistan to prove its bona fides.

The Way Forward

Enduring peace and stability on the subcontinent, therefore, is dependent on the courses of action India, Pakistan, China and the international community take from now on. As discussed earlier, India has no doubt read fairly correctly as regards to the threats it faces in Asia and has tailored her responses accordingly. For the future, in keeping with her belief that mere possession of nuclear weapons would act as a deterrent, it is likely that she would adopt a restrained nuclear posture, with the proviso that she will react appropriately if threatened or attacked with nuclear weapons. However, all this hinges on the other parties 'playing ball', so as to speak.

The blow-hot, blow-cold nature of Indo-Pakistani relationship has existed from 1947 onwards. However, very same brinkmanship that characterizes this relationship (aimed at the domestic political gallery) may cause events to go horribly wrong, resulting in a situation that neither side actually wants, that of a nuclear conflict. Therefore, it is imperative that like the US and the USSR during the Cold War, both India and Pakistan work to have confidence in each other. The process of nuclear risk reduction as suggested earlier in the paper has to be carried out *irrespective* of the prevailing political and diplomatic climate, a difficult task no doubt, but absolutely necessary and urgent. India could take the initiative and start a dialogue to implement the CBMs that were proposed earlier to and during the Lahore Summit.⁵⁰ For reasons discussed earlier, India need not feel chary of involving a neutral third party.

The central core to the India-Pakistan hostility is Kashmir. As it stands now, there are two options facing India as regards Kashmir. One, allow the status quo continue, with the certainty that Pakistan will continue to sponsor a proxy war in Kashmir and hope that sooner or later the War on Terror will take on Pakistan too⁵¹. This option is based on the premise that through proper risk management one would be able to allow the present situation (reasonable and affordable attrition) to go on without 'going off'. The other option, and the more desirable

would be a long lasting political solution to Kashmir. It would be in India's interests to resolve the Kashmir problem politically, especially at a time when there is a popular and democratically elected government governing in that state. Simultaneously, now is the time to lobby hard to get international pressure to bear on Pakistan to firstly, persuade her to accept that there will be *no change in status quo* regarding Kashmir and secondly, force her to *completely abjure terrorism* or support thereof in any form. Involving a neutral third party, India should draw Pakistan into accepting the LoC as the international border in Kashmir. In the current situation, the US would be only too happy to broker such an agreement. India need not be as wary as she was earlier, of involving a third party. However much the issue of plebiscite be drummed-up by Pakistan, it is unlikely that the international community would force a change in status quo over Kashmir, when a single one-time solution within the status quo, is achievable.⁵²

Conclusion

Imagine a time in the future where the Kashmir problem has been resolved peacefully and amicably between India, Pakistan and the Kashmiri people. In addition, both India and Pakistan have voluntarily and unilaterally halted their nuclear weapons program and reverted to strictly peaceful uses of nuclear energy. They have also thrown in, for a good measure, a complete elimination of weapon grade fissile material. That's not all, the two countries have also agreed to halt all missile related programs and destroy all ballistic rockets in their respective inventories. To top it all, they have signed up on the CTBT and the NPT. They have also agreed to participate in the FMCT negotiations⁵³ and promised not to violate the MTCR⁵⁴. In the light of what has been discussed in the paper, this situation appears unlikely, well nigh impossible. Incredible as it may seem, this is what is being attempted by a host of well wishers and interested parties, both official and un-official. At many levels and on many fronts, there are a host of

initiatives, plans and exchange of ideas, all with the hope that such an ideal situation sketched above, will come to pass. The main actors in the drama, India and Pakistan, while putting up a determined and resolute front for the benefit of their domestic constituencies, are hopefully exploring all means to lower, if not eliminate as a first step the heightened tension between them.

International relations in the contemporary world are experiencing divergent pulls and pressures depending on the global or regional magnitude of the players' aspirations. The United States has imperatives aimed at retaining its global pre-eminence in the political, economic and military spheres. Pakistan's imperatives are limited to regional goals aimed at acquisition of Kashmir, attaining an equitable power balance vis-à-vis India. China's internal anxieties in Sinkiang and Tibet demand a secure flank along its South Western extremities while it is occupied by its aspirations to great power status in global politics.

India's nuclear program was not initiated or sustained on xenophobic delusions. As in any working democracy, the process has been that of deliberate debate and consideration over a long period. In addition, India remains content with the ambiguous nature of its nuclear weapon status since it offered her adequate security without putting demands on her economy to deploy a visible nuclear force. India has never subscribed to principles of either nuclear arms racing or doctrines of nuclear war-fighting. Both are considered unethical and morally unjustifiable. India strongly believes that in a nuclear war there are no winners, especially in the South Asian region, which is home to a third of humanity. Despite her restraint, the threat of superpower politics in South Asia, her deteriorating security environment, a strategic asymmetry with a China known to providing nuclear support to Pakistan, a lack of assurance of global nuclear disarmament in the foreseeable future has forced India's hand.

Pakistan has finally articulated a direct and unambiguous threat of nuclear war. India cannot afford to ignore this nor should it over-react and trigger the very consequence that it seeks to avoid. A military dictatorship with its nervous finger on the trigger trying to ward-off fundamentalist pressures is hardly an encouraging scenario. India, given her enormous diplomatic and economic resources is entirely capable of conducting a well-orchestrated campaign to neutralize the Pakistani as well as the Chinese challenges if she wants to. It wouldn't be surprising if such an endeavor is already taking place behind the scenes. In the meantime however, India should continue to profess a non-aggressive, 'no first use' and credible minimum deterrence posture. In parallel, through diplomatic or other means, force Pakistan to engage in negotiations on reducing nuclear tensions through CBMs and mutual risk reduction measures. India is now in a position of comparable strategic symmetry with China, and this should be exploited to establish a peaceful relationship with it. The bottom line is that only sound diplomatic and economic strategies will ensure security and stability in the subcontinent.

History alone will tell whether the decision to go overtly nuclear was correct. In the meantime however, if not for her own sake, at least as an obligation to human kind, India has to take the initiative to reduce and finally eliminate the danger of a nuclear holocaust. She alone amongst the three (China and Pakistan being the others) has the innate strength of her democratic polity to aid her in the quest for an enduring freedom.

Notes

¹ General Pervez Musharraf, quoted in P.R. Chari, "Nuclear Restraint, Nuclear Risk Reduction", and the Security-Insecurity Paradox in South Asia". On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.stimson.org/asia/pdf> "There is also the belief that, "the threat is not Kashmir alone. The threat goes a little beyond and that there is this domination of Pakistan as desired by India...to dominate its economy and its foreign policy."

² Arvin Bahl, "India, America, Musharaff, and War: An Analysis", South Asia Analysis Group, 19 Jun 2002 and Rajesh Kumar Mishra "Terrorism and Pakistan: US Still Evading The Truth?" 04 Aug 2002. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.saag.org/>

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³ There have been numerous occasions when India has complained of Pakistani sponsored terrorism in Kashmir and in other parts of India. An example is the statement by India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. On October 3, 2001, HE Kamlesh Sharma, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations (UN) on measures to eliminate terrorism (Agenda Item 166) at the Plenary of the 56th session of the General Assembly. Full text of the statement and other documents are available from <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/document>.

⁴ Jim Hoagland "An Ally's Terrorism", The Washington Post, 03 Oct 2001 "You would think the radical Islamic guerrillas who claimed responsibility for Monday's attack (on the J&K State Assembly) -- the Pakistani-based Jaish-e-Muhammed group -- might deserve to be at least called terrorists. India implored the United States to put the group on its terrorist list for earlier outrages. But Washington declined out of fear that such action would undermine the regime of Gen. Pervez Musharraf and complicate U.S. diplomatic goals. Washington knows full well that Pakistan actively supports Jaish-e-Muhammed and other guerrilla organizations that see terror as the only effective tool they have against India".

⁵ Rashmee Z Ahmed, *Musharraf ready to use N-weapons against India*.

⁶ "Pakistan Vows To Match India Pullback" CBS News.Com., 17 Oct 2002. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.asia.cnn.com>.

⁷ Ahmed Rashid, "Pakistan-US Tensions Escalate" The Nation, 04 Dec 2002 "US officials also say Pakistan continues to allow infiltration of militants into Indian Kashmir despite Musharraf's pledge in June to cease doing so a charge Pakistan denies. US officials have warned Pakistan not to underestimate India's possible military reaction if there are major terrorist attacks in Indian Kashmir this winter. Last weekend some 50 people - militants, Indian security personnel and civilians - died in violence in Indian Kashmir. There appears to be little change in Pakistan's policy of backing militancy despite a new government in Srinagar that has pledged to address Kashmiri grievances and talk to the militants...."

⁸ Isabel Hilton, "Pakistan is being slowly Talibanised: Musharraf has handed over the border regions to al-Qaida allies" [The Guardian](#), 11 Dec 2002.

⁹ Avery Goldstein, "E-Notes -U.S. Policy Toward China: Try for the Best, Prepare for the Worst" Foreign Policy Research Institute. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.fpri.org/>. Also see Sujit Dutta, "India's Evolving Relations with China," Strategic Analysis, Vol. XVII, No. 4, July 1995, 477-502.

¹⁰ Ted Galen Carpenter, "India in the Balance" 16 Jun 2001. Cato Institute, Washington D.C. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.cato.org>.

¹¹ Richard D. Fisher Jr, "Getting India Right" The Washington Times, 02 Apr 2001. For an interesting thesis on the subject of China's global ambitions, see Steven W. Mosher, *Hegemon: China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World*, (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000) and Bill Gertz *The China Threat: How the People's Republic Targets America* (Washington D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2000).

¹² Michael Yahuda, "China and the Kashmir Crisis :Analysis" London School of Economics and Political Science. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk>.

¹³ Sonika Gupta, "Global War on Terror and Chinese Foreign Policy", IPCS. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.ipcs.org/>.

¹⁴ "The United States welcomes the successful conclusion of elections in Jammu and Kashmir.... The Kashmiri people have shown they want to pursue the path of peace....We unreservedly condemn the terrorist attacks aimed at disrupting a democratic process and intimidating the Kashmiri people....Following the completion of credible elections in Jammu and Kashmir, we call on both India and Pakistan to make strenuous effort towards an early resumption of diplomatic dialogue on all outstanding issues, including Kashmir....The United States and the international community will continue to make every effort to help India and Pakistan resolve their differences." Extract of **Press Statement by** Richard Boucher, Spokesman, Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State. Washington D.C. 10 Oct 2002.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ SS Chandel, "India and China: Cutting the Gordian Knot" Institute for Peace & Conflict Studies, 23 Apr 2002. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.ipcs.org>.

¹⁷ PR Chari, *Nuclear Restraint, Nuclear Risk Reduction, and the Security-Insecurity Paradox in South Asia*. Robert Jervis, *The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy*, 31.

¹⁸ Paul Bracken, *Fire in the East: The Rise of Asian Military Power and the Second Nuclear Age* (New Delhi:Harper Collins Publishers India Pvt. Ltd., 1999), 103.

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¹⁹ Indeed, the Kargil Review Committee Report notes: "What Pakistan attempted at Kargil was a typical case of *salami slicing*.[Government Security Deletion]. Since India did not cross the LOC and reacted strictly within its own territory, the effort to conjure up escalation of a kind that could lead to nuclear war did not succeed. Despite its best efforts Pakistan was unable to link its Kargil caper with a nuclear flashpoint, though some foreign observers believe it was a near thing" The Kargil Review Committee Report. Parts of the report are quoted in P.R. Chari, *Nuclear Restraint, Nuclear Risk Reduction, and the Security-Insecurity Paradox in South Asia*.

²⁰ "This is precisely what India wants to avoid and Pakistan desperately seeks to bring about" Jones, 107-108.

²¹ PR Chari.

²² W.P.S Sidhu "India's Security and Nuclear Risk-Reduction Measures" and Chris Gagné "Nuclear Risk Reduction In South Asia: Building on Common Ground". On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.stimson.org/asia/pdf>.

²³ Amit Gupta, "Pakistan's Elusive Search for Nuclear Parity" in *India's Nuclear Strategy*, ed. Raju G.C. Thomas and Amit Gupta, (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2000), 158. Also see Sony Devabhaktuni, Matthew C.J.Rudolph and Michael Newbill, "Key Developments in CBMs between India and Pakistan" in *Global Confidence Building: New Tools for Troubled Regions*, ed. Michael Krepon, Michael Newbill, Khurshid Khoja and Jenny S. Drezin, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 189-204.

²⁴ Amit Gupta, *India's Nuclear Strategy* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2000), 159.

²⁵ Sony Devabhaktuni et al, *Global Confidence Building: New Tools for Troubled Regions*, 209.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 210.

²⁸ Ibid., 213-221.

²⁹ Michael Krepon, "Nuclear Risk Reduction: Is Cold War Experience Applicable to Southern Asia?" On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.stimson.org/asia/pdf>.

³⁰ *The Simla Agreement of 1972*. On-line, Internet. Full text available from <http://www.indianembassy.org> and at <http://www.jammu-kashmir.com>.

³¹ Ray Takeyh and Nikolas K. Gvosdev, "Rein In Pakistan or Lose India: U.S. must focus on a resolution of the Kashmir dispute". On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.latimes.com/>.

³² Text of the Lahore Declaration, February 21, 1999, On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.indianembassy.org>

³³ PR Chari.

³⁴ PR Chari, "Apparently, in Pakistan, 'the assumption has been that if the enemy launches a general war and undertakes a piercing attack threatening to occupy large territory or communication functions, the 'weapon of last resort' would have to be invoked. India has not clarified what it considers impermissible actions."

³⁵ Chris Gagné, *Nuclear Risk Reduction In South Asia: Building on Common Ground*.

³⁶ Harinder Baweja, "The Logic of Third Party Intervention". On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.stimson.org/asia/pdf>.

³⁷ "New vistas beyond Agra summit?" The Hindu, 19 Jul 2001.

³⁸ Harinder Baweja, *The Logic of Third Party Intervention*.

³⁹ Ibid..

⁴⁰ "Healing Kashmir" The Washington Post, 01 Dec 2002.

⁴¹ UK Ministers seek Kashmir Role. CNN.com, Internet. Available at <http://cnn.com/>. "The challenge.....was highlighted by India's new External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, who indicated Kashmir remained an issue to be resolved by the feuding parties. "There is absolutely no scope for any third party intervention or role in as far as the Jammu and Kashmir dispute is concerned between Pakistan and India," Sinha said."

⁴² "Why Indians are so sensitive to the Kashmir issue that they will not agree to either US or international mediation is because multinational India is afraid that it might follow the fate of the multinational Soviet Union and fall apart. Indian elite considers Jammu and Kashmir, the only Indian state where the majority of the population is Muslim, to be the weakest link in a Hindu-majority country. They fear and with some reason, that should India be weakened, Kashmir would be the first territory lost." Victor Gobarev, quoted in Harinder Baweja, *The Logic of Third Party Mediation*.

⁴³ Shekhar Gupta, "To Kashmir, Via the World," Indian Express, 7 August 2000.

⁴⁴ Harinder Baweja, *The Logic of Third Party Mediation*.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

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⁴⁶ Text of speech by President William J. Clinton, Islamabad, March 2000. President Clinton also said that the LoC was sacrosanct. Harinder Baweja, *The Logic of Third Party Mediation*. Amusingly enough, Pakistan viewed this dismaying statement differently. It maintained that Clinton's statement was *aimed at India* as a warning against crossing the LoC.

⁴⁷ Harinder Baweja, *The Logic of Third Party Mediation*

⁴⁸ "U.S.-India Counter Terrorism Joint Working Group" Press Statement by Richard Boucher, Spokesman, Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State. Washington, D.C. 18 Jul 2002.

⁴⁹ "Healing Kashmir" The Washington Post, 01 Dec 2002.

⁵⁰ The Lahore Declaration.

⁵¹ "New Year Dissolutions: The War on Terror inches towards Pakistan. Is this for real?", Edit. The Indian Express, 03 Jan 03. Online, Internet. Available from <http://www.indianexpress.com>.

⁵² Michael Krepon, "Last-Minute Diplomacy: Washington's Endorsement Of The Loc After Kargil Only Increased Pak Worries And Fanned The Crisis More". Outlookindia.com, 29 Apr 2002. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.outlookindia.com>. The question of autonomy has to be discussed with the legally elected representatives of the people and a solution found within the framework of the constitution, a step that was contemplated many times but shied away from, due to the misplaced fear of Kashmiri secessionism.

⁵³ Both India and Pakistan supported the mandate for FMCT negotiations adopted by the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in early 1995. Subsequently, however, India and Pakistan had second thoughts about supporting both of these treaties.

⁵⁴ Lora Lumpe, *The Missile Technology Control Regime*, Joseph Cirincione and Frank von Hippel eds., "Ballistic Missile Defense in Perspective". Federation of American Scientists. On-line, Internet. Available from <http://www.fas.org>. The MTCR is not a binding treaty but, rather, a voluntary arrangement. In addition to curbing exports, the MTCR has curbed indigenous missile production by several developing countries. Membership in the regime has now quadrupled to 28 partners, with the most recent additions being Argentina, Brazil, Hungary, Russia, and South Africa. New membership is at the discretion of current members, but the basic requirement is effective national export control policies and procedures. Only nine states (Britain, China, France, India, Israel, Japan, Russia, the Ukraine and the U.S.) and the European Space Agency currently possess intercontinental range missiles or space launchers. The United States is the only country that has ever sold ICBMs (*Polaris* and *Trident II* SLBMs to Britain). The only other missile sale to even approach this transaction occurred in 1988, when China sold Saudi Arabia fifty of its intermediate-range CSS-2 missiles (2,800 km range). This sale contributed greatly to concerns about missile proliferation and to the establishment of the MTCR. Since then, there have been no long-range missile sales to developing countries.

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